

The London Library Emerging Writers Programme 2026/27

Thank you for your interest in The London Library Emerging Writers Programme.

The Programme, now in its eighth year, is a unique opportunity which offers writers, in all genres and disciplines, one year's free membership of The London Library and includes writing development masterclasses, networking opportunities, peer support, access to and guidance in using all the Library's resources and publication in the cohort anthology. With its rich cultural heritage, extensive open access book collection, dedicated writing spaces and diverse community of established writers, the benefits of Library membership are invaluable.

For 185 years, The London Library has played a central role in inspiring writers and researchers, helping them explore and develop their work. From Charles Dickens to Sarah Waters, Charles Darwin to Simon Schama, Virginia Woolf to Kazuo Ishiguro, Bram Stoker to Jessie Burton, TS Eliot to Raymond Antrobus, writers have found it to be an unrivalled resource.

The London Library Emerging Writers Programme is open to anyone over 18 years of age who is committed to pursuing a career in writing and wants to develop their practice. Applicants should be working, or planning to work, on a specific project, with the aim of publication or production, and have a clear idea of how they might use the Library's resources to achieve that aim. They should be UK based, willing to fully participate in all elements of the Programme and immerse themselves in the writing community it offers. There is no application fee and participation on the Programme is funded.

The Programme runs from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. Successful applicants will be invited to a Programme launch on 1 July 2026. Sessions take place in the evenings (from 6.30-9pm) usually on the third Tuesday of the month and alternate between peer support meetings and masterclasses or workshops, all of which are designed to work across all forms of writing. The Programme will take place at the Library. Some access and travel bursaries are available.

Applicants will be selected anonymously by a panel of judges, including writers and industry professionals from across all different forms of writing. You'll find the names of the judges on the [Programme webpage](#).

Applications close at 5pm on Monday 23 February 2026.

Please read through the following Application Guidelines (including eligibility requirements) carefully before you submit your application. Applications which do not follow the guidelines will not be considered. You can find a comprehensive set of [FAQs here](#). If you still have any questions regarding your application, please contact the Programme Team on 0207 766 4765 or emergingwriters@londonlibrary.co.uk.

We look forward to receiving your application and good luck!

[Apply online](#)*

Programme Funding

The Emerging Writers Programme is only possible thanks to the support of donors and funders, including The Charlotte Aitken Trust, Hawthornden Foundation, Bloomsbury Publishing, Amazon Literary Partnership and The International Friends of The London Library.

* If you are unable to access the form, please try switching off your web protect security setting.

Application Guidelines

These guidelines and instructions will help you decide whether you are eligible for the Programme and explain how to correctly complete your application. Please read them carefully!

Eligibility

- The London Library Emerging Writers Programme is open to anyone aged 18 or over (as of 1 July 2026).
- Applicants must be resident in the UK for the duration of the Programme.
- This Programme is for emerging writers. We define an emerging writer as someone who:
 - has not previously published a novel, full-length non-fiction book, a poetry pamphlet, a full collection of poems or short stories, a picture book or a graphic novel;
 - has not had work professionally produced or commissioned via mainstream channels or studios for film or television;
 - has not had works professionally produced or commissioned by a theatre or touring company for runs of five days or more and/or has not had a funded festival run in the UK or internationally. Has not had a full-length audio drama commissioned.
 - is not currently under contract to produce any of the above.

This does not include:

- self-published work;
 - short stories, articles or poems published within an anthology, journal, magazine, newspaper or online;
 - works produced non-professionally for film, television or stage, short films, or theatrical runs under 5 days;
 - textbooks or academic texts.
- The Programme is open to writers of any genre/form/writing discipline.
 - Applicants must be committed to making use of The London Library resources including:
 - use of the physical space as a base for writing and networking;
 - use of the collection (both physical and digital) to inspire thought and inform research and writing.
 - The Programme is open to writers living anywhere in the UK, however, applicants must be committed to attending Emerging Writers Programme events at the Library. This will include a launch (1 July 2026), an end-of-Programme event (26 June 2027), and one event per month (usually the third Tuesday of the month). Bursaries are available to members of the cohort who need support to participate in the Programme - this may include travel costs, childcare or other access needs. This will be allocated on a case-by-case basis, based on proof of need.
 - Applicants must be planning to work on a specific project or projects whilst on the Programme.
 - Current London Library members are eligible to apply.
 - Employees and trustees of The London Library and current or previous Emerging Writers Programme participants are not eligible to apply.

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the submission guidelines. We reserve the right to disqualify any submissions that do not fully comply.

If you have any questions relating to your eligibility or if you are unsure, for any reason, whether you would be able to participate in the Programme, please contact the Programme Team on 0207 766 4765 or email on emergingwriters@londonlibrary.co.uk.

Submissions

- To apply, you must fully complete the [online form](#) which asks for:
 - Your personal/contact details;
 - A little about you and your writing project, including a personal statement (up to 200 words), why you are applying for the programme (up to 200 words), a very brief description of the project you intend to work on throughout the Programme (up to 250 words) and the genre/discipline of your project. This section of the form will be judged anonymously so please do not include your name or any specific identifying information (i.e. a web address, weblinks, the year you won a particular prize, titles of your work in the public domain, the character you play on TV etc – anything that allows us to find out who you are in one Google).
 - An uploaded sample of your writing, up to 1000 words, from the same project or in the same genre/discipline. If you are submitting poetry, you can send multiple poems, as long as the entire document does not exceed the word count. The word count applies equally to playwriting and screenwriting.
 - An Equal Opportunities Form.
 - Please make sure you read all the instructions and guidelines on the form.
 - N.B. If you are unable to access the form, try switching off your web protect security setting.
- All writing samples must be uploaded as Word documents or PDFs in 12pt font size and 1.5 or double spaced. Please do not send documents in Pages or Final Draft as we will not be able to open them.
- Please make sure your name is not anywhere on your writing sample (including the filename) as your sample will be judged anonymously. Please check headers/footers and if you are using screenwriting software, please take care that your name is not automatically included anywhere in the text. If your name appears on your writing sample, your application will not be considered.
- Your writing sample must not exceed the word count of 1000 words. Any samples over the word count will not be considered and your application will be void.
- Please do not include CVs as these will be disregarded.
- You will be able to save your application and resume another time but, once submitted, your application cannot be altered.
- We will only accept one application per person. If you submit more than one, all your applications will be void.
- Applications must be received by 5pm on Monday 23 February 2026. You will not be able to submit applications after the deadline and we will not accept late submissions. Please do not ask us to do so!
- You will be sent an immediate automated email confirmation to say that we have received your application. If you do not receive this email, feel free to check the application has gone through by emailing us at emergingwriters@londonlibrary.co.uk.
- All work will be treated confidentially and, if not selected, will be destroyed after the application process.
- All applicants will be contacted with the outcome of their application by 31 May 2026.
- Incomplete applications or applications which do not comply with the above guidelines will not be eligible.
- We strongly recommend that you do not leave your application to the very last minute. Sometimes the system can rebel against too many people trying to send applications simultaneously (usually a few hours before applications close) and your application may not go through.

Selection

- Applicants will be assessed on the strength and potential of their writing. Commitment to full participation in the Programme and use of the Library as a resource will also be taken into consideration. We are particularly interested in how this specific Programme might help applicants develop their work.
- We will be looking for a diverse range of projects, genres and writing styles when selecting the cohort of Emerging Writers.
- The Emerging Writers Programme can accommodate up to 40 writers.
- Applicants will be selected anonymously by a panel of judges including writers and industry professionals from across all different forms of writing.
- We welcome applicants from all backgrounds, circumstances, and any age upwards of 18.

N.B. Each applicant's place is supported by our philanthropic funders. Financial support covers each applicant's membership and entry to all events on the Programme. Access bursaries are available to support members of the cohort who may face financial, health, or any other barriers that would prevent them fully accessing the Programme and are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Emerging Writers Programme is not publicly funded.