

Hay Festival is inviting new applications for Hay Festival Writers at Work 2026, its professional development opportunity for Welsh writers, in partnership with Literature Wales, funded by Arts Council of Wales.

Deadline for submissions is 2.00 pm, Thursday 26 February 2026

This opportunity for professional development for Welsh writers will take place during Hay Festival (21 May – 31 May) from Friday 22 May to Sunday 31 May 2026. The fully programmed 10 days will allow selected writers to attend masterclasses, workshops, and to network with Welsh, UK based and international writers, publishers, press and agents.

The activities and networking opportunities curated during the 10 days will primarily focus on adult fiction and non-fiction and will be mainly led through the medium of English but applications from poets and those writing for young adults are also welcomed. We specifically encourage writers working in Welsh, and writers who use both languages to apply. Please note that this programme is not aimed at scriptwriters (stage nor screen). Eligible applicants are Welsh writers (born, schooled, or living in Wales) who show a clear commitment to professional development and able to cite evidence of publication.

Participants may be writers in the early phases of their writing career who are looking to start building a professional pathway for themselves, or mid-career writers who might be facing difficulties with their next publication and need support to reach their career goals.

Hay Festival also invites applications from more established writers who feel they have achieved all they can in one genre or language, but who face barriers in attaining a desired step change. The assessment panel is particularly interested in hearing how applicants believe their work contributes to Wales' contemporary literary landscape and how the programme will support them at this precise moment of their careers.

There is no age limit, beyond the minimum age of 18, and there are 10 places available.

The unique gathering of the literature and publishing industry that takes place at Hay Festival will enable the selected writers to increase confidence, skills, and to form a peer group to support their writing development and career, leaving the programme inspired to create new work and achieve their personal ambitions.

Writers at Work is free to attend. A Writers at Work Bursary will cover accommodation, travel from within Wales or the UK and subsistence on site. The Festival site is fully accessible for wheelchair users and performance venues are fitted with induction loops. Guide dogs are permitted. All accommodation will be booked by Hay Festival, but participants must make their own travel arrangements; costs for travel will be reimbursed.

How to Apply

Please fill out <[this digital application form](#)>. A large print and dyslexia friendly version can also be downloaded below. We suggest preparing and saving a copy of your application on a word processing document.

The application will ask for the following:

- Details of publications
- A writer's biography - including professional experience and career highlights (no more than 200 words).
- A statement outlining your aims and ambitions as a Welsh writer and how a place on the Writers at Work scheme will enhance this (no more than 300 words).
- A short outline of your current project or work-in-progress (no more than 200 words), and how you think this might contribute to Wales' contemporary literary landscape (no more than 100 words).

Only digital applications are accepted, either via the [digital form](#), or if returning a large print or dyslexia friendly version, by email to writers@hayfestival.org

Applications delivered by post and late applications will not be considered.

To find out more about the application and selection process, and for a more detailed overview of the programme, please read our FAQs.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

The aim of the week is to broaden creativity, output, peer group support and publishing contacts. Your commitment will be for the entire duration of the programme, which runs from morning to evening on some days.

Hay provides accommodation as part of the bursary (please see FAQ below) and selected writers will have to be resident close to Hay-on-Wye from Friday 22 May (arrive in the early afternoon) and leave Hay on the evening of Sunday 31 May 2026. Most workshops begin at 10.00 am each day.

Each writer will be expected to complete a full and detailed evaluation of the week and to write for Hay Festival's blog during the Festival week.

After reading the FAQs, if you have any questions or require additional information, please contact:

writers@hayfestival.org

FAQs

Do I need experience to apply? Or am I too experienced?

We are mainly looking for emerging and mid-career writers who are looking to seriously build a career pathway for themselves. This intensive programme is designed to help you develop the toolkit you need to start, and continue on your journey as a writer.

If you are already an experienced writer, for example you might have published your own pamphlet or a book, you might still find that there are barriers which prevent you from reaching your full potential, or you might want to experiment with a different literary form or language. Everyone will have a different definition of what experience means, and where they believe themselves to be on their journey as a writer. The assessment panel is eager to know how you believe the programme could support you at this precise moment of your career.

How will my application be assessed?

The assessment panel will include members of the Hay Festival and Literature Wales team, and Tiffany Murray – the curator and leader of the programme. We will be looking for innovation, passion, and a clear focus in terms of your ambitions and aspiration as a writer.

The assessment will focus on bringing together a diverse and representative group of writers in terms of geography, writing experience, languages, and any lived experience noted in the application that will present a new perspective to Welsh writing. Short listed applicants will be invited to attend an informal short online interview.

When will I know if my application has been successful?

We will contact all applicants in the week beginning 6 April 2026.

What publication examples do you accept?

Applicants must provide evidence of publication in print and/or digital formats. Accepted genres are fiction, non-fiction, and poetry (written and/or performed).

Publications may include contributions to anthologies or literary magazines, or an independently published title.

Please note that this programme is not intended for stage or screen scriptwriters.

What will the structure and the content of the week look like?

The programme will be an intense immersion in professional writer development and will start in the afternoon of Friday 22nd May on site at the Festival and come to an end on Sunday afternoon 31 May 2026.

Each day will be different, and will feature talks, workshops, visits to the Festival events, evening events, and more.

You will be expected to attend all Writers at Work programmed events throughout the day. This is an intensive programme which depends upon the group working together and supporting each other. The Hay Festival and Literature Wales teams are available to

discuss any concerns and requirements relating to this before and throughout the programme. Further information on the structure and content of the week will be provided as soon as possible beforehand.

You will meet several guest readers, speakers, facilitators and industry representatives during the week formally and informally. Whilst you will have structured writing exercises from some writers during the programme, the fast-paced nature of Writers at Work will not leave much time for you to spend on developing your work in progress. We trust that you will leave with a toolkit, the ideas and the enthusiasm to continue with your personal writing projects after the festival ends.

How do the catering arrangements work? & I have food allergies and/or dietary requirements, can you cater for me?

You will receive all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) on the Festival site in the crew catering facility. There will be provision for those with food allergies and/or dietary requirements. Coffee, tea and other drinks will be available throughout the day. Please note you will have to pay for any other food or drink purchased outside of crew catering, workshop or Green Room facilities.

How will my travel be reimbursed?

We will reimburse out of pocket expenses for one, standard class, return journey to the Festival from within the UK.

This includes:

- Standard Return Rail Fare
- Coach or Bus Return Fares
- Mileage @ 45p per mile

Expenses could be a combination of the above i.e. a train and bus ticket. We can purchase tickets in advance for you, otherwise please retain a receipt, or complete a form for mileage and your travel costs will be reimbursed when you arrive at the Festival.

Where will I be staying?

Participants will be allocated accommodation in houses in Hay on Wye or the surrounding area, depending on availability. The accommodation will be single occupancy rooms in shared houses with other Writers at Work participants, unfortunately we are unable to accommodate family or friends during the residency or guarantee ensuite rooms due to the scarcity of rooms available.

If I am unsuccessful, will I receive feedback?

Unfortunately, due to the high volume of applications we will receive, we will not be able to provide feedback to

unsuccessful applicants. However, with your permission as outlined in the application form GDPR Consent section, Hay Festival and Literature Wales may contact you again to mention further opportunities.

In which language will the programme be delivered?

The programme welcomes writers writing in English, Welsh and other languages. However the majority of the programme itself will be delivered through the medium of English.

I have a disability or an illness that might make it difficult to take part, can you help?

The Hay Festival and Literature Wales teams are available to discuss any concerns and requirements before and throughout the programme. The Festival site is fully accessible for wheelchair users and performance venues are fitted with induction loops. Guide dogs are permitted. Please contact us to discuss accessibility,

and we will invite all successful writers to send an Access Rider in advance of the Festival week.