



THE WRITING SQUAD

CORE TEAM MEMBER - JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

POSITION:	Core Team Writer
REPORTS TO:	Writing Squad Director
FEE:	£5,500 for 35 days over a 12-month period

CONTEXT

The Writing Squad exists to create the next generation of writers in the North. Every two years we recruit 30 writers aged 16-21 who live, work or study in the North of England and offer them workshops and 1-1 support. Afterwards we continue to offer our writers writing and professional development as they begin their careers.

We help them establish themselves as individual artists, collectives and new start-up companies and facilitate them to make new work together and support each other's development. We link writers and activists with the literature industry and independent sector, while encouraging them to produce and distribute work themselves. We create projects that offer them experience and employment.

Our support is rigorous and long term and our USP has always been the individual attention we give Squad writers in working towards their personal writing and professional goals. What we offer is shaped by the constant renewal of the needs, ambitions and circumstances of our writers.

We take Squad writers seriously as writers, artists and activists, they just happen to be young.

The Writing Squad is a national portfolio organisation of Arts Council England, their current funding commitment runs until April 2022.

Of the 211 writers we have worked with since 2001, we are still in contact with 146 of them and over the last two years have offer some kind of continuing support to 96. 20% of the 211 currently make all, or a substantial part of their living through writing or cultural activities. 28%, while not making significant income, have become recognised as emerging writers, artists and performers.

The Squad is made up of a Core Team led by Director, Steve Dearden, who works four days a week, and four writers, the playwright Emma Adams, novelist Jenn Ashworth, poet Malika Booker and poet and maker Stevie Ronnie, each working 35 days a year. The team is supported by Amelia Collingwood, one day a week.

After six years as a founder Core Team member, Jenn Ashworth has decided to move on. We are recruiting for a new Core Team writer with a specialism in prose fiction.

THE JOB

The fee is £5,500 plus travel and meeting expenses is for 35 days a year in which you would:

- provide one-to-one feedback to members of the Writing Squad on texts/materials they create
- offer advice and insight and create links for Squad writers and activists as they develop their writing careers
- communicate with Squad writers through face-to-face meeting, phone-calls, Skype/Zoom, emails and any other effective means agreed
- collect data to inform the rest of the team, enabling both qualitative and quantitative evidence to be collated for internal and external reporting/accountability
- attend two core team meetings a year

Notionally this would break down into

- 15 days for 1-1s
- 10 days of general email feedback
- 7 floating days for extra reading time, dropping in on other Squad activity
- 2 days to meet as a core team.

During the course of the two-year cycle you will be invited to offer workshops to the Squad as part of our programme. You will receive an additional fee for delivering these workshops.

HOW DO WE WORK?

The Squad is a virtual organisation. We have no offices, we work from home and wherever we are, holding workshops in hotels or partner organisations in Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds and sometimes places inbetween. We hold our residentials in hotels and meet for one-to-ones in libraries and coffee shops or on Skype.

A great deal of our activity relies on technology and social media. We communicate electronically and are a paperless organisation. We value information and its rapid dissemination among our writers. We utilise Twitter, Facebook, email, text, Skype, Zoom, Slack and Eventbrite to build and communicate within the Squad community.

We meet up too: through one-to-ones with Squad writers that are administered by the member of the team delivering them, through our two annual core team meetings, through four annual board meetings and in our workshops. Each year we might typically hold 18 day-long workshops and 2 two-day residentials.

WORKING WITH THE WRITING SQUAD

You will be expected to provide your own office accommodation. Expenses can be claimed for travel.

Our patch is the whole of the Greater North, from the Scottish border down to the Cheshire, South Yorkshire and N/NE Lincolnshire borders. In reality, our writers live all over the country and all over the world. The Director is based in Manchester. Workshops take place in Newcastle, Manchester Leeds, occasionally places in between, and London. Project activity can take place anywhere.

The contract is offered on a freelance basis, reviewed annually. You will be responsible for your own national insurance and taxes. We are looking for someone who is a flexible, someone who can combine Squad work with the rest of their portfolio career.

You will be expected to have, or gain before signing a contract, proof of a recent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

www.writingsquad.com

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit a letter by email to steve@writingsquad.com telling us why you want the job and what you will bring to it, including details of your experience of developing prose writers. Accompanying this should be a CV and a sample of, or links to, your work. Please send all this in one document, preferably a pdf.

Do look at the Squad website for further information, however, if you would like to discuss any aspect of the Squad's work please email steve@writingsquad.com with your questions or suggesting times when you will be available for a phone discussion.

The Closing date is 12 noon on Friday 17th April.

Interviews will be in Leeds on 5th May, if travel restrictions are still in place then due to the current health emergency, then we will interview online.

We will reply to everyone who applies and we will pay the travel and access expenses of those we invite to interview.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are looking for candidates who support the values of the Writing Squad as outlined in the context above.

We are looking for people who are passionate about writers and new writing, people who get up in the morning excited by the prospect of working with other writers and who are able to balance this with their own writing career.

We need writers who are self-motivating, independent and like working as part of a committed, creative and flexible team.

EXPERIENCE

Five years' experience of writer development.

A track record as a published writer.

KNOWLEDGE

You will be expected to have a knowledge of

- contemporary and historical practice in long and short form prose fiction and a an awareness of creative non-fiction, auto-fiction and the essay
- the regional, national and international sector in your writing specialism
- development opportunities for writers in those sectors.
- the principles of equality, protection and sustainability and the ability to apply these in working with Squad writers, other employees and the public.

SKILLS

You will be expected to possess demonstrable skills in

- leading writing workshops
- offering one-to-one development to writers on their texts
- offering professional development advice to writers on their careers
- interpersonal communication, including the ability to relate to people of different ages, and from different educational, cultural, and social backgrounds.

We also expect

- an excellent level of responsibility, reliability, and punctuality
- appropriate and professional behaviour at all times.