



# THE WRITING SQUAD

## CORE TEAM MEMBER - JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

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

### WHO WE ARE

The Writing Squad exists to create the next generation of writers in the North of England.

Every two years, we recruit 30 writers aged 16-21 who live, work or study in the region and offer them workshops and 1-1 support. From there, we continue to provide creative and professional development as they begin their careers.

We help them to establish themselves as individual artists, collectives, and companies, and to collaborate with each other, forging a mutually supportive network. Crucially, we take Squad writers seriously as writers, artists, and activists – they just happen to be young.

We link them up with the literature industry while encouraging them to produce and distribute work themselves. We create projects which provide experience and employment.

Our offer is shaped by the constant renewal of the needs, ambitions, and circumstances of our writers. We measure a writer's success by their own metrics, and our USP is the individual attention we give them in working towards their goals. Our support is rigorous and long term – once writers join the Squad, they become life-long members.

The Writing Squad is a national portfolio organisation of Arts Council England, their current funding commitment runs until April 2023, although we hope to remain in the ACE portfolio when it is announced this April, which would give us another three year's funding.

Of the 245 writers we've worked with since 2001, we are still in contact with 158, and over the last two years have offered continuing support to 96. 20% 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's Core Team is led by Director Steve Deaden, who works four days a week, and four writers: playwright Emma Adams, novelist Francesca Haig, poet Malika Booker and poet and maker Stevie Ronnie – each working 35 days a year. The team is supported by coordinator Billie Collins, 1.5 days a week.

After two years as a Core Team member, Francesca Haig is moving back to live in Australia. 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, covering 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 meetings, 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 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, and hold workshops, 1-1s and residentials in hotels, arts venues, coffee shops or with partner organisations across the North.

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, as well as the role technology plays in making what we do as accessible as possible. We utilise Twitter, Facebook, email, text, Skype, Zoom, and Eventbrite to build and communicate within the Squad community. The pandemic has only bolstered our hybrid approach to working.

We meet up too: through 1-1s administered by the Core Team member delivering them, through two annual core team meetings, four annual board meetings and in our workshops. Pre-pandemic we typically held 12-15 workshops and at least one two-day residential a year. During the first year of the pandemic we put on over 200 workshops and goal-setting sessions. Our new hybrid model should settle at about 18 in-person and 12 online workshops a year.

## **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.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Please submit a letter by email to [steve@writingsquad.com](mailto: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.**

**Please also fill in and return [this equal opps form](#), it will not be used in the selection process and the information will remain confidential.**

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](mailto:steve@writingsquad.com) with your questions or suggesting times when you will be available for a phone discussion.

We want you to be able to make the best application in the easier form for you. Let us know if there is any way we can help you do that.

**The Closing date is 12 noon on Tuesday 20th September.**

Interviews will be in Leeds on the Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September.

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

The person spec is below ....

[www.writingsquad.com](http://www.writingsquad.com)

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

We are looking for candidates who support the values of the Writing Squad as outlined above, people who are passionate about writers and new writing, who are excited to work with other artists, and can 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.

We don't teach, we are not a creative writing course, we work together as practicing writers and our support is holistic and flexible.

We have a strong vision and values, but we embrace change and look for Core Team members who will help shape the Squad of the future.

### **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 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.