



## Manchester Multilingual City Poets: Call Out

Manchester City of Literature are inviting poets to apply for consideration to be our two new Multilingual City Poets, taking over from our inaugural poets Ali Al-Jamri, Anjum Malik and Jova Bagioli Reyes. The City Poets will work across our Partnership Network, acting as an ambassador for Manchester's residents, communities, and literature organisations. The City Poet roles carry a civic responsibility, much like conventional Poet Laureate designations, and the appointees will be commissioned to produce new writing, as well as contribute to the development of poetry in education through workshop facilitation with partner organisations/schools. There will also be opportunities for funded international travel for both poets.

Commissioned work will respond to themes relevant to the poets via key dates in the 2025 calendar year (past poems include Ali Al-Jamri, [Crisis of Humanity](#) for United Nations World Arabic Language Day 2023 and Jova Bagioli Reyes, [Unbelonging](#) for World Poetry Day) and/or respond to other exciting public events, projects and community outreach programmes coordinated by Manchester City of Literature and its partnership network (e.g. Anjum Malik, We are Butterflies Forever in Flight with Manchester Indian Film Festival). The poets will also translate each other's writing into their mother tongue.

Manchester has a rich literary tradition, as home to some exceptional and high-profile poets, a thriving poetry and spoken word scene, awarding-winning publishers and writing development agencies and libraries which place writing and community outreach at the heart of their work. This heritage is represented in Manchester's designation as an UNESCO City of Literature in 2017.

The two newly appointed City Poets will occupy the role for a period of one year and will each be paid a **total fee of £3,250** for a number of key deliverables that make up each City Poet position, including:

### **Poet 1 (ideal for early to mid career multilingual poets)**

*This position will connect with key focal points of Manchester City of Literature's work throughout 2025 and enhance the celebration of these projects through the creation of new work.*

Key deliverables:

- 1x international travel: Barcelona, poetry festival (May 2025).
- 3x poetry commissions with marketing via news post/press release & social media.
  - World Poetry Day (March 2025).
  - Manchester Literature Festival's 20th anniversary (September 2025).
  - International Mother Language Day (Feb 2026).

- 2x translations of *Poet 2's* work into your own mother tongue.
- 1x community engagement work: the nature of which will be agreed after appointment.

### **Poet 2 (ideal for mid-career to experienced multilingual poets)**

*This position will primarily focus on output for a key international exchange project. The project with Nanjing is funded by the British Council's International Collaboration Grants. Collaborations between six artists (poets - including our new Multilingual City Poet - you! - illustrators and playwrights) will create new multilingual work to be published and exhibited in both Nanjing and Manchester, including at the Festival of Libraries in Manchester in June 2025.*

Key deliverables:

- 1x international travel: Nanjing, March 2025.
- 1x MCOL specific project/commission: a collaborative artist-exchange project with partners in Nanjing to culminate at Festival of Libraries 2025 with a creative poetry/art 'booklet' as the key outcome.
- 1x poetry commission with marketing via news post/press release & social media.
  - International Mother Language Day (Feb 2026).
- 3x translations of *Poet 1's* work into your own mother tongue.
- 1x community engagement work: the nature of which will be agreed after appointment.

For both roles, we are particularly open to poets bringing in their own community networks in order to enhance and shape the focus of their 'community engagement' piece of work. Examples of the kind of project that could be delivered include (but is not limited to):

- Facilitating a writing workshop/talk in a school setting.
- Facilitating a writing/translation workshop for another poetry organisation as a guest speaker.
- Speaking on relevant panels about poetry/multilingual writing and translation.
- Organising a workshop at International Mother Language Day 2025/2026 or Festival of Libraries 2025 with a relevant community group.
- Hosting a multilingual poetry night/open mic.

### **City Poet Characteristics**

We are looking for two City Poets who:

- Are fluent in reading and writing poetry in at least one language other than English. Due to our previous three poets' fluency in Arabic, Spanish and Urdu, we will be prioritising applications from those who work in languages other than these.
- Have a publication or live performance history of at least 2 years.
- Have a strong and demonstrable relationship with Manchester.
- Have experience of working as a writer and facilitator in a number of settings, including, but not limited to: libraries, schools and community settings.
- Are passionate about representing Manchester and increasing its profile as a city of literature.
- Are comfortable producing commissions with specific briefs and tight deadlines.

- Are comfortable solo-travelling internationally (although please note that this is not an absolute requirement and we are open to conversations with those who may prefer not to take on this travel for *Poet 1* specifically).
- Ability/willingness to learn to work cross-culturally and with cultural sensitivity, especially for *Poet 2*.
- Experience/willingness to work with other artists on a joint project, especially for *Poet 2*.

### **Application Process**

Poets interested in applying for the role should send an expression of interest to [hawwa.alam@manchestercityofliterature.com](mailto:hawwa.alam@manchestercityofliterature.com) outlining their suitability for the role and detailing what they can offer as the City Poet. This letter should be no longer than 3 pages of A4 and clearly state whether the application is for the position of Poet 1, Poet 2, or either role.

Should you prefer, we will accept expressions of interest submitted in the form of a video or audio recording. These should be no more than 8 minutes in length.

We are also inviting applicants to submit an artistic CV which demonstrates your experience as a poet. This should be no more than 2 pages of A4 and should speak to the City Poet characteristics outlined above.

Finally, we request that applicants submit 2 original poems of their choice to support their application. This can be any poem of your choice, a new unpublished poem or a personal favourite that gives Manchester City of Literature and its partners a sample of the work that you do. We have no preference as to the format of these poems. Applicants can submit written poems or link to videos of the poem being performed.

**Closing date for applications is midnight on Sunday 1 December 2024.**

### **Selection Process**

Once the deadline for application has passed, the Manchester City of Literature team will shortlist applicants and arrange for interviews to take place.

Ahead of the interview, shortlisted applicants will be provided with further details of what the interview will entail so that they can adequately prepare.

**Notification of shortlisted applicants by:** Wednesday 4th December 2024

**Interviews:** Monday 9th December 2024

### **Further Information**

Should you have any questions, please direct them to [hawwa.alam@manchestercityofliterature.com](mailto:hawwa.alam@manchestercityofliterature.com) in the first instance.

### **Values of Manchester City of Literature**

*The Contractor shall ensure the vision and values of Manchester City of Literature, stated below, are embedded in all their activities and communications.*

The successful applicants will be expected to support the realisation of the collective vision for Manchester City of Literature, formed through conversations with stakeholders across the city, for: an innovative, distinctive, equitable, globally connected city of reading and writing, where diverse voices are celebrated, where creative talent and industries are nurtured and where literary activity changes lives.

They will demonstrate and promote the City of Literature's core values, which are:

- **Distinctive:** Creating distinctive cultural experiences inspired by Manchester's unique, radical character and rich cultural heritage whilst looking to the future.
- **Inclusive:** Celebrating the rich diversity of voices in the city, building on the strengths of Manchester's people and widening participation in literary activity.
- **Transformative:** Developing skills, nurturing creative talent and transforming lives.
- **Connected:** Linking and supporting literary activity and enabling collective advocacy for Manchester's literary community and international collaborations.
- **World-leading:** A beacon for high quality, culturally democratic, truly diverse literary activity.

*As a UNESCO Creative City, Manchester City Of Literature is committed to building international relationships with other Creative Cities and believes that these relationships and sharing of practice create bridges of understanding between peoples. These bridges cross political, geographical, ethnic, cultural, religious and other divides. Manchester City Of Literature therefore supports the right to freedom of opinion and expression and believes there is a significant benefit to be gained from working in cooperation with Creative Cities to champion freedom of expression, share best practice and demonstrate the benefits that can be gained in cultural, economic and social terms from enabling such freedoms.*

The project with Nanjing is funded by the British Council's International Collaboration Grants.

