



## Celebrating Talent at the Margins

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*2016 Evaluation Report*



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## 1.0 Introduction

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The purpose of this report is to evaluate the delivery of the 2016 Creative Future Literary Awards (CLFAs), noting its key successes and identifying challenges, as well as making suggestions for improving delivery in future. The report will include a brief summary of Creative Future as a whole before giving a more detailed analysis of key elements of the project (the national workshop programme, the competition itself, the judging process, the showcase event, the anthology, and the award-winners and their professional development). In addition, an analysis of financial activity against budget and marketing activity is included towards the end of this report. To compliment this analysis, we have also included qualitative information such as interviews and writing samples.

## 2.0 Background and context

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### 2.1 ABOUT CREATIVE FUTURE

Founded in 2007, Brighton-based charity Creative Future (CF) provides support, mentoring and the chance to showcase work to talented people who lack opportunities due to mental health, disability, or social circumstance. Creative Future works primarily with writers and visual artists. In addition to the CFLAs, Creative Future manages other flagship projects for visual artists including The Tight Modern, a mini-replica of the Tate Modern, which showcases the work of talented visual artists through national and regional touring. Since 2007, we've worked with 4,000 artists; delivered 275 workshops; mentored 123 individuals and run 73 events for audiences over 150,000.

### 2.2 ABOUT THE LITERARY AWARDS

The Creative Future Literary Awards were launched in 2013 as the UK's first and only national literary competition that celebrates talented under-represented writers. Winners are selected by a panel of industry experts, and prizes include £1000 of cash awards alongside professional development opportunities. Our high-profile showcase event features a selection of readings from award-winners, as well as critically acclaimed guest writers. Winning submissions are also published in an anthology, available in hard copy and as an e-book.

Alongside the competition, we also run a series of workshops with key regional partners, and this year, introduced a Writer in Residence scheme for mid-career under-represented writers.

In 2015, our key successes included:

- We received double the number of entries to the competition compared to the previous year, including 40% of entries coming from writers who hadn't entered a writing competition before.
- Income from other sources included a Brighton and Hove Arts Partnership Award (£1,750), a grant from Joseph Levy Foundation (£4,000) and the People's Health Trust (£1,000), as well as funding from Arts Council England through the Grants for the arts programme (£35,225). An additional £15,520 of support in kind was provided by project partners.
- High-profile writers Lemn Sissay and Maggie Gee were engaged as guest writers.

While the 2015 Awards were a success, there were some key lessons take forward:

- It was noted that press and PR activity should be brought in-house OR a specialist PR consultant should be engaged by Creative Future directly.
- Signing and returning a partnership agreement should be a condition of free workshops being offered to an organisation.
- Ensuring adequate lead-in time to allow advance personal contact to be made with participants should be a priority.
- Vulnerable service users are less likely to engage with 'one off' activities, so a more regular workshop presence must be sought.
- Creative Future should support partnerships between development agencies and local organisations already working with marginalised adults.
- More effort should be made to recruit writers who are homeless or in temporary accommodation; refugees or asylum seekers; or travellers.

These points were taken into account when planning the 2016 CFLAs, though as noted later in the report some elements (such as marketing and PR) remain challenges.

Building on both the successes and learning from 2015, Creative Future aimed to expand the CFLAs in the following ways:

- Increase the number of workshop days in partnership with arts development agencies in each location from 1 to 3, ensuring more regular points of contact over time.
- Pilot a scheme where we embed local writers in residence (who themselves have experience of marginalisation) within three social care organisations.
- Work with Kingston University Press to develop a strong and considered distribution plan for the CFLA anthology.
- Work with a qualified PR agency who can help us raise the profile of the awards nationally.

## 2.3 ABOUT THE PROJECT MANAGERS

Previous Arts Council England relationship manager, Fergus Evans, left the post of CFLA Project Manager in October 2016 due to relocation. We opened applications for a new project manager in September 2016, receiving 21 applications and interviewing a shortlist of 5. Overall, we were impressed by the quality of applicants. In the end, we appointed Sarah Juckes, who has a strong track record of managing literary events, including the award-winning 'One Big Book Launch'. Thanks to internal processes and tools such as Asana, we have found the transition relatively seamless.

## 3.0 Marketing and Press

### 3.1 WEBSITE & DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

This year, **the CFLA website has received over 22K visits**. Like last year, we see a definite spike in visits whilst the competition is open – the **highest monthly number being in May at 1.5K**. Overall, visitor numbers are down slightly on the previous year, and so we have recently changed our web platform to sit closer to our Creative Future parent site. You can now find our website at <https://literary.creativefuture.org.uk/>

We have seen a slow growth in reach on social media. Our Twitter followers have risen from 956 to 1130, and our Facebook Likes have risen from 187 to 268. This year, we have also **created closed Facebook groups for our prize winners**, as a dedicated support space for them to share ideas, advice and successes.

As part of the 2016 showcase event we commissioned independent filmmakers People Staring to create an advocacy video summarising the value of the CFLAs, as well as individual recordings of each of our award-winners reading their submissions at our showcase event. These are being released monthly onto YouTube to coincide with our newsletter. We are also pleased to announce **a new partnership with Canvas**, and hope that with their training and promotional support, we can grow our social reach.

The CFLA newsletter plateaued in terms of subscriber numbers and open/click rates, averaging 1660 subscribers and an open rate of between 20% - 28%. Although this is in line with the industry standard of 25.45%, more could be done to increase the click rate of 2%-3%.

### 3.2 PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Drawing from our learning in 2015, this year we wanted to allocate press and PR to a specialist consultant, who would work closely with the CFLA Project Manager. After a marketing consultation with match funders, Lloyds TSB Foundation, we were recommended to try Riot Communications. Riot specialise in literature, and their clients include World Book Day, Penguin and Waterstones. Riot were pleased to take the marketing of the CFLAs on at a discount, as they were keen to support our mission.

Riot showed that they had key contacts in the publishing industry, and we were pleased to be featured for the first time in The Bookseller (200,000 monthly visitors) and BookBrunch (50,000). This, alongside a regional feature in Newtownards Chronicle, meant that we exceeded our KPIs for press coverage in 2016. As a result of the Bookseller feature, we were also approached by Katee Woods (Winner of PR Team of the Year Award 2015, Charity Times). Katee volunteered for our sister project, the Tight Modern, and succeeded in obtaining local TV coverage for this from the BBC and ITV. We have since asked Katee to become a member of the Creative Future board, and she has agreed to help with future marketing efforts for the Literary Awards.

Overall, we found Riot to be very knowledgeable and well-connected. However, we wonder if we might get better value for money working with a freelance PR consultant in the future. Although Riot helped us secure some national press, we wish to increase this year on year.

Alongside efforts made by Riot Communications, we also made use of our partner contacts to reach writers across the UK. The CFLAs were featured in newsletters, blogs and on social media with Paul McVeigh (reach 10000), Disability Arts Online (2500) and New Writing South (10000) – among others. We were also featured on The Reuben and Sharon Show on Radio Reverb (reach 3500).

### 3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD:

- Combine industry contacts of new Project Manager, Sarah Juckes, with new board member, Katee Woods, to maximise reach to industry and national press.
- Use donation from CFLA Patron Lemn Sissay, to invest in a social advertising pilot, as well as collaboration/consultation with renown industry publicist and advocate for under-represented communities, Julia Kingsford (of Kingsford-Campbell and The Good Agency).
- Seek to grow newsletter subscribers by asking workshop participants and competition entrants to subscribe.
- Increase newsletter open and click rate through format experimentation and A/B testing.
- Continue to work closely with partners, deepening ties and forging new partnerships for cross-marketing.

## 4.0 Workshop Programme

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In 2015, we piloted our first-ever national workshop programme, working in partnership with six writer development agencies around England. In each location we delivered two workshops – one aimed at early career or emerging writers and one aimed at more established writers. Overall, we reached **54 under-represented writers** across the country and **1 in 5 workshop participants went on to enter the competition**. Feedback from participants and partner organisations was generally very positive. However, we did note that more vulnerable service users are less likely to engage with ‘one-off’ activities, and that an increased presence would help to build trust. Some regional partners struggled to recruit participants from under-represented backgrounds, and it was felt they would benefit from having stronger relationships with social care organisations in their area.

Based on these findings, we set out to:

- Increase the number of workshop days in all six locations from one to three.
- Partner each development agency with a local social care organisation.

### 4.1 WORKSHOP PARTNERS

Unfortunately, we had limited success in securing additional funding from trusts and foundations in 2016. We therefore decided to pilot an expanded 3-day workshop programme in two locations – Brighton and Preston. One workshop day in Plymouth was cancelled due to low preregistration, but we were able to partially offset this loss by offering an additional workshop in Manchester in partnership with PANDA (performing arts network), a new relationship for Creative Future. In addition, **we successfully partnered all of our six regional partners with a social care organisation** in their area:

- New Writing South with Preston Park Recovery Centre (mental health organisation).
- Spread the Word with Leonard Cheshire (disability organisation).
- Literature Works with Plymouth Guild Carers Group (carers organisation) CANCELLED.
- Writing West Midlands with SIFA Fireside (homeless organisation).
- They Eat Culture with Foxtan Centre / Base 18 (sex workers and substance misusers).



- New Writing North with Freedom From Torture (refugee and asylum seeker organisation).

Of these relationships, only two were pre-existing, meaning that **we were able to broker four completely new relationships between highly-regarded arts organisations and award-winning social care organisations**. Satisfaction ratings amongst partners were very high – **100% of respondents told us that they felt valued as a partner, and would work with Creative Future again**. Respondents also told us that their **confidence around working with under-represented writers increased by a third** throughout the partnership.

In addition, we provided all regional partners with a participant recruitment pack. Not only did this include resources like sample press releases, suggested communications timelines and digital content like photos and videos – **we also provided all of our partners with top tips and examples of best practice when trying to work with hard-to-reach communities**. 100% of our writer development agency partners told us that they were very likely to use this pack to recruit participants for other projects.

While we are happy to have **more than doubled the number of partner organisations we're working with** to deliver the national workshop programme, this has also created some challenges – especially as our own capacity as an organisation did not increase accordingly. Two organisations – They Eat Culture and Literature Works confirmed the location of their workshop less than a month before the workshops themselves. It is perhaps not surprising that these two locations struggled the most to recruit participants, though They Eat Culture did eventually have some success recruiting participants to later workshops. Despite having expressed our concerns with Literature Works about the low numbers of preregistrations and offering support (such as a list of social care organisations), only two people had preregistered as late as two days before the workshop itself. In light of this, we decided to cancel the workshop. Given Creative Future's limited staff capacity **it is recommended that in future we partner with organisations who either have the willingness or the capacity to deliver to the expectations outlined in their partnership agreement**.

#### 4.2 WORKSHOP FACILITATOR

In order to endure consistency of workshops, we decided to appoint one workshop facilitator to design and deliver all of the national workshops with the support of the

CLFA Project Manager. After the success of 2015, we were extremely pleased to re-appoint Pat Winslow - an award-winning poet and short story writer. Pat has **over 20 years' experience delivering creative writing workshops to vulnerable adults and under-represented communities**. She was Writer in Residence at HMP Long Lartin for seven years and has delivered workshops in partnership with a number of care agencies including Manchester Alcohol Services, Oxford Social Services, and the Order of St John Care Homes. These projects have seen her work with a wide range of clients, including: people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues, people living with Cystic Fibrosis, care leavers, at-risk young people, offenders and ex-offenders, homeless people, and elders.

In addition to her extensive experience as a workshop facilitator, Pat is also an accomplished writer. She has released seven collections of poetry and her short stories have been featured in a number of critically acclaimed anthologies such as *Parenthesis* (Comma Press) and *No Limits* (Crocus Books). Pat has **won a number of**

*"I am really pleased to be Creative Future's Literary Awards Workshop Facilitator. It's always a privilege for me to engage with people's creative processes and to be given the chance to discover the world again – because that's what good writing does – it makes sights and sounds and smells seem brand new."*

- Pat Winslow, CFLA Workshop Facilitator

**major literary prizes** including the Wilfred Owen Poetry Award; the Guernsey International Poetry Competition; the Keats-Shelley Prize; the Rialto Nature Poetry Prize; the Poetry London Competition; the Bridport Poetry Prize, and the BBC Alfred Bradley Award. Her most recent poetry collection *Kissing Bones* is published by Templar Press.

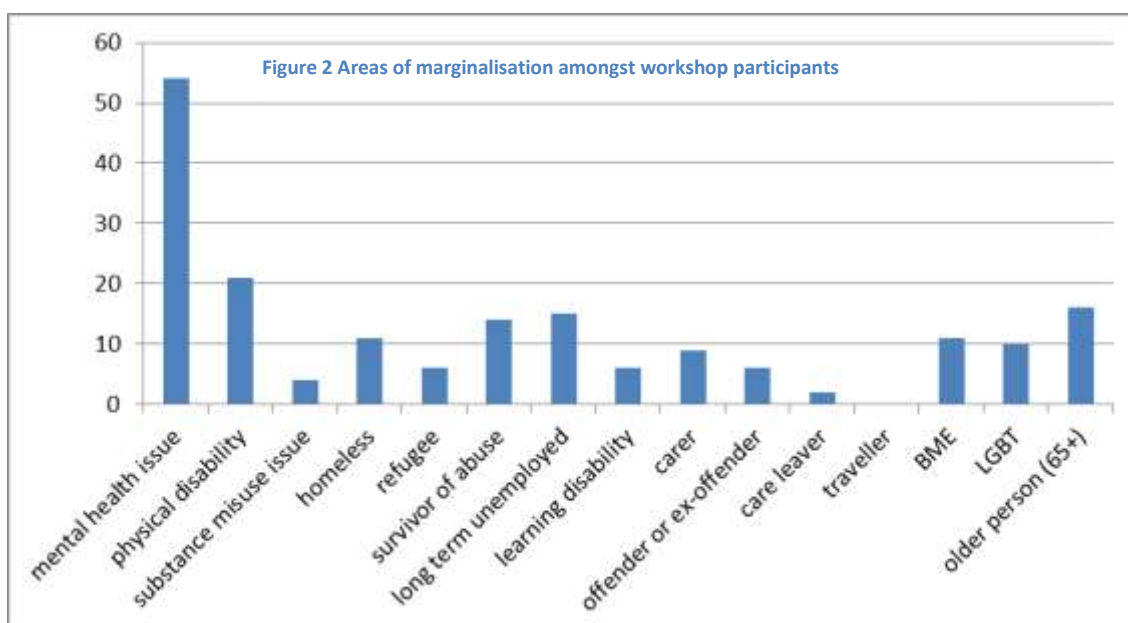
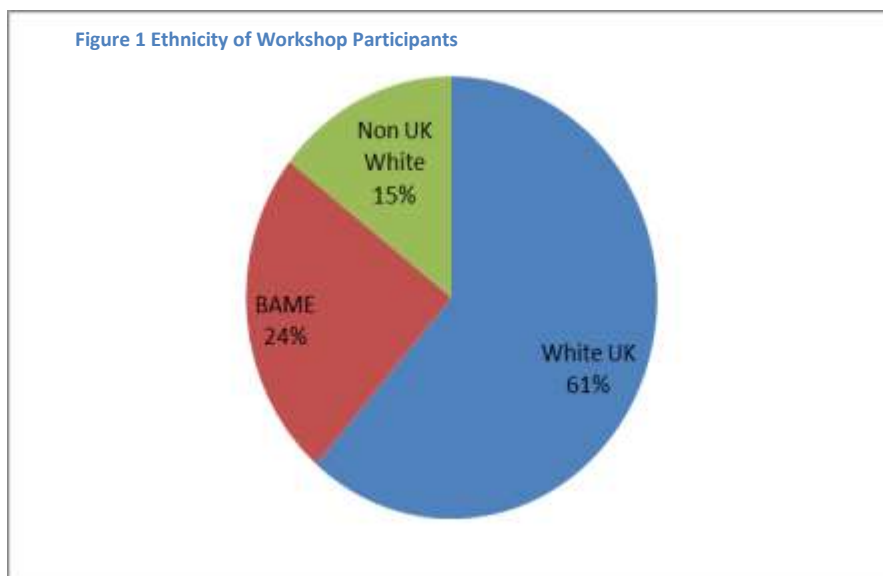
Pat continued to receive exceptionally high satisfaction ratings, with **100% of respondents saying that the course was well-taught**. In addition, 21% of positive comments about the workshops themselves specifically mentioned Pat.

#### 4.3 PARTICIPANT NUMBERS & DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall, **we engaged 99 under-represented writers across England as participants through our workshop programme**. This is **almost twice the number of participants we reached in 2015**. Our **average attendance per workshop also increased**, from 5 participants per workshop in 2015 to 7 in 2016. We know that as many of our target participants are vulnerable with unpredictable mental and physical health, the number of preregistered participants who don't attend on the day will be high. **The drop off rate was in fact slightly lower** in 2016 (32% compared to 35% in 2015). In

areas where we offered more than one workshop, **the re-attendance rate was 80%**, with **10% of participants attending all three workshops**. This confirms our thinking that offering more workshops in the same location is an excellent way of building deeper relationships with writers around the country.

Overall, **our workshop participants reflected a greater ethnic diversity** than the national average, with only 61% identifying as White British (see Figure 1). In addition, **we reached people who identify with a range of marginalisations** (see Figure 2). 55% of our participants told us they had a mental health issue – again, this is higher than the national average (25%). It is interesting to note that **almost half (48%) of workshop participants told us that they identify with more than one area of marginalisation**.



#### 4.4 PARTICIPANT IMPACT

We know that our workshop programme is a valuable tool to engage writers who may otherwise feel that professional creative writing opportunities aren't for them. **78% of our workshop participants have never entered a literary competition before.** However, as in 2015, **1 in 5 of our workshop participants then went on to enter our competition, with one of our top prizes (Silver Award for Prose) going to someone who we'd first engaged through our workshop programme.**

In addition, these workshops are effective in increasing skills and confidence. Workshop participants reported a **41% increase in their skills as writers.** This figure is even higher amongst participants who attended **more than one workshop**, as they reported a **48% increase in their skills as writers.** This suggests that **more engagement in one location can have a better cumulative effect on developing writers.** In addition, **94% of participants told us that the workshop helped them to increase their confidence as writers.**

*"I've barely ever done any creative writing and I really enjoyed it - also expected to hate (!) what I wrote but thought it was ok which is big for me! Also really struggle in groups but found everyone friendly and coped loads better than usual. Also usually hate reading in front of people but wanted to push myself and it was ok. Glad I did!"*

**- Workshop participant**

#### 4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

- Signing and returning a partnership agreement should be a condition of free workshops being offered to an organisation.
- All partner organisation staff working on the workshop programme should receive a briefing note outlining expectations on both sides, in case this information has not been communicated effectively internally.
- Creative Future should investigate ways to increase presence within partner organisations over time to build trust with partners' service users.
- Ensuring adequate lead-in time to allow advance personal contact to be made with participants should be a priority going forward.
- Creative Future should support partnerships between development agencies and local organisations already working with marginalised adults.



Photo Credit: People Staring

## 5.0 COMPETITION, AWARD WINNERS & SHOWCASE

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The theme for the 2016 Creative Future Literary Awards national literary competition was 'A Sea Change', inspired by a quote from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

The competition itself opened on 14 March and closed on 13 June.

### 5.1 ENTRANT DEMOGRAPHICS

In total, we received 166 entries (92 poems and 74 short stories) from **139 under-represented writers around the UK**. These figures are roughly in line with those from 2015, which is somewhat surprising – early indications suggested that we might receive double the number of entries. In future, closer monitoring of entry levels could help to ensure sustainable growth to the number of entries.

As with our workshop participants, **entrants reflect somewhat more ethnic diversity than the UK average**, with only 74% of entrants identifying as White British (see figure 1). However, this reflects significantly less ethnic diversity than workshop participants, and less than in 2015. This suggests that more could be done in future to attract more BAME writers to enter the competition.

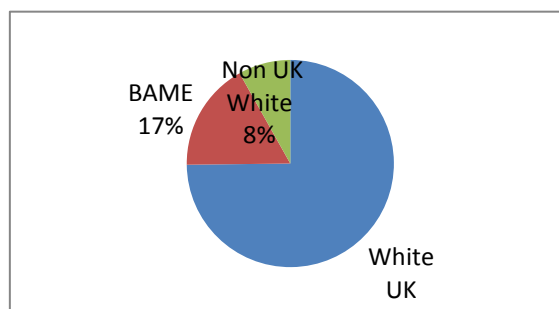


Figure 2: Ethnicity of entrants

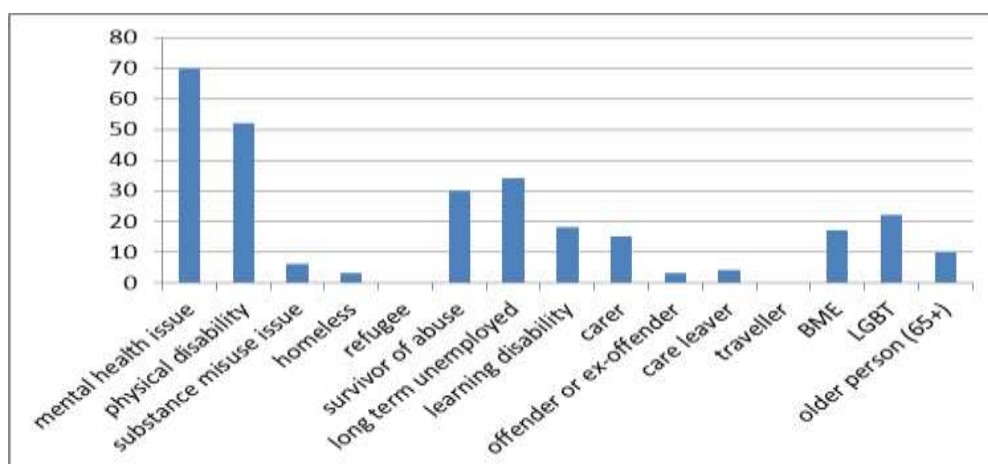


Figure 2: Areas of marginalisation amongst entrants

The area of marginalisation most commonly chosen by entrants was mental health (25%), though physical disability was also high (18%) – see figure 2. 61% of entrants identified with more than one category of marginalisation, and 26% identified with three or more areas. This suggests that not only are Creative Future reaching under-represented writers – **we are engaging writers who face a number of interrelated barriers to accessing development** and creating opportunities that might not be addressed through schemes focusing on one area of marginalisation.



As in 2015, the greatest concentration of entrants lived in London and the South East, with almost a third of entrants living in Brighton & Hove. This may be due to Creative Future’s profile in the region. However, it is interesting to note that **the next largest concentration of applications came from Birmingham**, and is significantly higher than in 2015. This suggests that the profile of the awards is growing.

## 5.2 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Creative Future Director Dominique De-Light and CFLA Project Manager Fergus Evans selected **a long list of 35 entries** from the 166 poems and short stories we received. Long listed entries were then submitted to our full judge’s panel, which was comprised of:

- Lemn Sissay – Creative Future Patron
- Candida Lacey – Publisher & Managing Director of Myriad Editions
- Aki Shilz – Editorial Services Manager for The Literary Consultancy
- John Prebble – Chief Executive, New Writing South
- Dominique De-Light – Co-Founder & Director, Creative Future
- Fergus Evans – CFLA Project Manager
- Pat Winslow – CFLA Workshop Facilitator

Our judges’ panel narrowed the entries down to a short list of 16 poems and short stories, from which the twelve award-winning pieces were chosen. They are as follows:

Platinum Poetry	<i>Murlough Beach</i>	Lauren Stevenson
Platinum Fiction	<i>Sewing Flowers</i>	Maeve Clarke
Gold Poetry	<i>Morphoses</i>	Olivia Scott-Berry
Gold Fiction	<i>A Belated Invasion</i>	Michelle Porter
Silver Poetry	<i>Kircaldy</i>	Barry Carter
Silver Fiction	<i>Ground</i>	Stephen Riley
Bronze Poetry	<i>Serotonin</i>	Gareth Strachan
Bronze Fiction	<i>A Picture of You</i>	Peter Jordan

Highly commended Poetry	<i>Ferry back from the Isle of Man</i>	Owen Lowery
Highly commended Fiction	<i>New Water</i>	John Attridge
Commended Poetry	<i>Inventing Brother in Batangas Port</i>	Romalyn Ante
Commended Fiction	<i>The Green and the Sea</i>	Kaori Crawford



Platinum Fiction Winner Maeve Clarke (L) and Creative Future Patron Lemn Sissay (R)  
Photo Credit: People Staring

Of the twelve finalists, **five (42%) had never previously entered a literary competition.** As with both our workshop participants and entrants overall, **the most commonly cited area of marginalisation was mental health (58%).** Just under half of the finalists cited **more than one area of marginalisation.**

### 6.3 SHOWCASE EVENT

The awards were announced at our annual Showcase event, which took place on 8th September at **London's iconic Southbank Centre as part of Unlimited Festival.** In total, **82 tickets were booked.** A number of VIPs were in attendance, including staff from **Poet in the City, The Literary Consultancy, New Writing South, Apples & Snakes and funders Arts Council England and Lloyds TSB.** However, it is noted that the Showcase still struggles to attract

publishers and literary agents and more work could be done in this area.

Highlights can be viewed by visiting <https://youtu.be/l5cvmqxmWoQ>.

### 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

- More effort should be made to recruit BAME writers to enter the competition.
- Monitoring processes should be put in place to record entries to the competition, to ensure a sustainable growth in numbers.
- Dedicate partnership and networking efforts to publishers and literary agents, to ensure the literary world is more aware of the event & opportunity.



- A new prize will need to be sought for the Gold Awards winners, as New Writing South have discontinued their Writer Guide service. This is a good opportunity to offer more accessible prizes to our widening demographic via quality online courses. (See appendix C.)

## 6.0 ANTHOLOGY

As in previous awards, each of the award-winning entries was published in an anthology alongside pieces from our guest writers, Lemn Sissay and Michelle Green. This year, the anthology also featured writing from Tara Gould – our new Writer in Residence. The editing and typesetting of the manuscript was

*'We've hugely enjoyed working with Creative Future. It has been an honour.'* –  
**Candida Lacey, Publisher and Managing director, Myriad Editions**

overseen by project partners Myriad Editions and the printing process was overseen by Kingston University Press. A digital version of the anthology was created by SelfSelfSelf and is now available for download via Amazon.

Distribution and marketing of the anthology remains a key area for improvement. Previously, we were hoping to enlist the services of a student volunteer at Kingston University to create and deliver a marketing plan as part of their course. However, the timing of the anthology launch (September) conflicted with the academic year, which made this difficult. As a non-publisher, we have also had difficulty listing the print version of the book for sale on Amazon.



### 6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD

- A distribution and marketing plan for the anthology should be made prior to launch.
- Further quality partners should be sought to handle distribution via Amazon, preferably via Print on Demand.
- A new editing and design partner will need to be sought, as Myriad Editions are unable to offer their support in kind for the 2017-18 year.

## 7.0 Writers in Residence

In 2016 we piloted an innovative new writer-in-residence programme, placing high-quality mid-career writers in social care settings. We hoped that doing so would allow these writers time and space to reflect on the stories they are drawn to tell, while also raising the ambitions of service users by demonstrating that a career in literature is possible – even for people from under-represented backgrounds.

Unfortunately, we did not secure enough additional funding from trusts and foundations to pilot residencies in three locations as planned. However, we were able to pilot a residency in Brighton, in **partnership with New Writing South and Preston Park Recovery Centre (PPRC)**, an award-winning mental health recovery centre.

### 7.1 APPOINTMENT OF THE WRITER IN RESIDENCE

We approached high profile writers who have lived experience of marginalisation to apply for this residency. It is interesting to note that a number chose not to, expressing that they felt like the opportunity should go to someone ‘more in need’. This



Host Site: Preston Park Recovery Centre

could suggest a **reticence on the**

**part of mid-career under-represented writers to take up further development opportunities**, and we are interested in exploring this in greater depth through consultation in future. However, we did receive 15 applications for the post, many of which were very strong. Of these, we invited five writers to come in and meet with a panel comprising of the CFLA Project Manager, the Director of New Writing South, and a Peer Trainer and long-time service user from PPRC.

Whilst the shortlist was very strong, the **panel unanimously chose Lewes-based writer Tara Gould as our first ever writer-in-residence**. Since studying a



Writer in Residence:  
Tara Gould

Masters in Creative Writing at Sussex University, Tara has had stories published in anthologies and had work featured on BBC Radio 4. She is passionate about supporting local writers and set up the live literature night 'Short Fuse' at Brighton's Komedia, and more recently 'The Small Story Cabaret' in Lewes.

## 7.2 THE RESIDENCY

Over the course of her residency, Tara spent time at PPRC, **speaking to the Centre's service users about her experience of being a writer** as well as working on a collection of short stories. Tara received **mentorship and bespoke training** from Creative Future and support from PPRC. In addition, she received **a bursary to support dedicated writing time** and had **a new short story featured in our annual anthology** alongside the CFLA award winners, and guest writers Michelle Green and Lemn Sissay.

For the most part, the experience was a positive one for Tara – **her confidence in working with under-represented writers increased** and **she successfully met a number of her professional development goals**, including working on new short stories and taking some time to reflect on where she was as a writer and where she would like to go. She noted that **she learned new skills** working with Creative Future and PPRC, and that she felt valued by both organisations.

*"The residency has been excellent in so many ways. It has been one of the best writing/career experiences I've had. This has been incredibly enriching and rewarding as well as building my own confidence as a writer working in a community setting. I will not forget the connections I built."*

**- Tara Gould**

However, there were some areas for improvement. Tara noted that her relationship with partners New Writing South was less rewarding than expected, as she had limited contact with them. Tara said that **she would have welcomed more creative feedback** during her residency, such as feedback on her writing. She also expressed that it **was difficult to find time to write** whilst onsite with her host organisation, and would have welcomed more quiet time for her writing as well as extending the length of the residency itself, suggesting that the length be doubled.

*"Tara was very soothing... [She helped me] to organise my chaos of ideas and penetrate my thinking more deeply."*

**- PPRC Client**

For their part, host organisation Preston Park Recovery Centre were very pleased with the results of the pilot. **We reached 56 vulnerable adults** over the course of three months. In addition to benefits such as **increases to well-being and overall confidence**, service users also reported a **40% increase to their skills as writers just through meeting and building a relationship with a professional writer**.

Preston Park Recovery Centre felt the pilot was very successful in meeting their main objective – increasing the well-being of their service users – but also noted that the best aspect of hosting a writer in residence was clients **uncovering or re-discovering an interest or passion for writing**. However, they also flagged the length of the residency as the biggest challenge, noting that ‘it can take time to build up trust with our clients, and **an extended residency could have a significant impact on engagement.**’

*“Tara had a wonderful, calm presence with clients at the centre. People would naturally want to approach and speak to her. Tara had a positive relationship with a client who has quite fixed ideas, and managed to work well and creatively with her. This was a pleasure to watch. You could see that Tara had a huge amount of empathy and understanding with the people she interacted with.”*

**- Beth Shepherd  
Recovery Pathway Manager**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

- The length of the residency should be increased from 3 to 6 months to increase the depth of engagement with service users and the benefits to the writer-in-residence themselves.
- Dedicated quiet writing space (either on site or through the Writer Development Agency Partner) should form part of the professional development package.
- Support from the Writer Development Agency Partner (such as bespoke professional development and / or critical feedback) should be clearly outlined in the partnership agreement to ensure greater involvement.



From Left to Right – Commended (Fiction) Kaori Crawford and Writer in Residence Tara Gould  
Photo Credit: People Staring

## 8.0 Finance

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Alongside Arts Council funding, we were grateful to receive backing from Brighton and Hove City Council again, via their Arts Partnership Award. We also received funds and free marketing advice via Lloyds Bank Foundation, Goldsmiths Charity, the Local Sustainability Fund and the Joseph Levy Foundation.

Due to lower-than-expected income from trusts and foundations, we reduced spending lines for our workshop programme and Writer in Residence scheme (as detailed in this report).

Notable differences include:

- **Facilitator fees:** Our workshop programme was reduced as a result of not securing match funding, resulting in £2300 expenditure rather than £3600.
- **Workshop accommodation and travel:** Similarly, these lines were reduced by £934.
- **Honorariums:** By reducing our Writer in Residence scheme to one location only, we were able to reduce spending in this area by £1400.
- **Project Manager:** The Project Manager was bought on as an employee of Creative Future, resulting in an increase in expenditure of £1689.

A detailed budget can be found attached to the 'Income/Expenditure' section of the ACE evaluation.

## 9.0 Conclusion

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Overall, we were extremely pleased with the progression of the literary awards in 2016. We directly engaged 99 under-represented writers across England via our workshop programme – almost twice the number we reached in 2015. We received coverage in industry and regional press via a new partnership with Riot Communications. We were also overwhelmed with the continued support from our partners, and glowing feedback from participants – including indirectly via our new Writer in Residence Scheme.

As this evaluation report shows, we start the year with a good insight into the improvements we need to make, and efforts are already being actioned to do this. In particular, marketing and PR will become a focus for the next year, and we have some exciting partnerships lined up to help us do this.

Thanks to the quality and support of our partners, and the evidenced difference we continue to make to the lives of under-represented writers, **we are pleased to start the 2017-2018 year fully-funded.**



CFLA competition winners 2016, alongside guest authors and the Creative Future team, at the Showcase event.

## Case studies and interviews – A

### Interview with Michelle Porter – Gold award winner, 2016

#### Q1: Can you tell us a little about your experience as a writer to date?

I have been writing stories since childhood, pastiches of Beatrix Potter, parodies of sitcoms. I have written one play and have ghost written two non-fiction books. My personal writing really took off when I began blogging and received good feedback, it spurred me on to continue.

#### Q2: In 2016, your short story 'A Belated Invasion' won the gold award for fiction. Can you remember what encouraged you to enter the competition?

*"The award has given me a huge confidence boost. I feel more credible, less like an imposter."*

**- Michelle Porter  
Gold Award Winner (prose)**

A friend in my writing group advised me to enter. I was reticent at first as I could never imagine winning a competition. I'm so glad I did now.

#### Q3: Has winning the award has an impact on your writing?



The award has given me a huge confidence boost. I feel more credible, less like an imposter. My writing feels real now, not a hobby but a serious pursuit, an art I can develop and be proud of. I have received some really positive comments on my story and have been given that extra push to complete my novel.

#### Q4: What would you say to someone who is considering entering the competition, but is unsure whether they have enough experience as a writer?

You have to start somewhere. Even if you don't win, the discipline of sitting down and producing work to a deadline really helps you to focus your ideas.

**Q5: What's your one big tip for a new writer?**

Get together with others writers, join a writing group or form your own. Writers tend to be a supportive bunch and getting constructive feedback is so valuable. When you write on your own you can become overly critical, we all need writerly friends to boost our confidence.



## Case studies and interviews – B

### Interview with Maeve Clarke – Platinum award winner, 2016

#### Q1: Can you tell us a little about your experience as a writer to date?

I have written on and off for a long time. I did an MA in Novel Writing many years ago. My thesis was in the form of a novel, 'What Goes Round', and I was lucky enough for it to be published by Tindal Street Press in 2003. I have also had a couple of readers published, one for students of English as a foreign language and another for teens with poor literacy. In 2012 I was selected for Critical Mass - a playwriting course at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry and loved it. I've had a couple of short pieces performed script in hand, but nothing full-length. Towards the end of 2015, after a longer than planned break from writing, I decided to try and write as much as I

could and to try different forms of writing too – which is how the flash fiction entry for CFLA came about.



2016 was a good writing year for me, I was selected for Commonword's Women in the Spotlight 2016, for Birmingham Repertory Theatre's Write Away program. I won the CFLA Platinum prize for prose, and then ended the year with being one of the shortlisted writers for the Penguin Random House Write Live initiative. I feel very fortunate indeed.

#### Q2: In 2016, your short story 'Sewing Flowers' won the platinum award for fiction. Can you remember what encouraged you to enter the competition?

My friend, Tina Freeth, who was an award winner in 2015 told me about the competition. I had never tried writing Flash Fiction, but had wanted to give it a try for several years. The competition gave me a theme, a word count and a deadline – I had no more excuses.

**Q3: Has winning the platinum award has an impact on your writing?**

Yes. When I wrote Sewing Flowers, I knew it was a strong piece and I felt that each of the three characters in the story had so much more to say. Winning the award has really boosted my confidence and I'm really looking forward to starting the mentoring process, writing more and seeing my work develop. This is a really, great, practical prize. Thank you!

**Q4: What would you say to someone who is considering entering the competition, but is unsure whether they have enough experience as a writer?**

Do it! When I first started writing, I set myself the task of writing a short story from beginning to end over one weekend. I did – it had a beginning, middle and end – and that was enough for me. I entered it into a competition,

*"I had never written a piece of flash fiction until the CFLA, and here I am."*

**- Maeve Clarke**

**Platinum Award Winner (prose)**

not because I thought I would win, but because I had nothing to lose by doing so. Knowing that it would be read by somebody who didn't know me made it easier than showing it to a friend. I came third. Until now, that was the only competition I had ever won. So take the chance. It doesn't mean that you will be successful with everything you write, but if you don't try, if you don't share it – how will you know?

I had never written a piece of flash fiction until the CFLA, and here I am.

**Q5: What's your one big tip for a new writer?**

Write, write, write. Edit, edit, edit. Then write some more! Just try and write as often as you can, even if it is only five minutes a day to start with. Once your story starts to develop, and it will, you'll find yourself writing more and more. Eventually, you'll get to the point where you wake up and your first thought is about writing some more of whatever you're working on.

## CFLA prizes – C

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Two prizes are given at each level – one for poetry and one for prose. In addition to the joint prizes, publication in the Awards anthology and reading at the Showcase event, award winners at each level receive:

### Platinum

- £200 Cash Prize
- A [Chapter and Verse mentorship](#) with a published author or professional editor and a manuscript assessment via The Literary Consultancy, plus the chance to attend a TLC Industry Day
- A 'meet the professional' consultation with Tom Chivers, Director of [Penned in the Margins](#) (poetry) or Candida Lacey, Director of [Myriad Editions](#) (prose)

### Gold

- £150 Cash Prize
- A tailored package of professional development via New Writing South including [Writer Guide](#) one-to-one professional mentoring.
- A [manuscript assessment](#) via The Literary Consultancy

### Silver

- £100 Cash Prize
- £100 of vouchers for courses with your local writing development agency or other literature organisation

### Bronze

- £50 Cash Prize
- A voucher for a course with Creative Future

### Highly Commended

- A voucher for a workshop with Creative Future

### Commended

- A voucher for a workshop with Creative Future

No professional development prizes can be exchanged for cash. Award winners outside of the region may need to conduct meetings or mentoring via phone, email, or Skype. Award winners outside of the region at the Bronze, Highly Commended, and Commended level may exchange their voucher for a one-to-one coaching session with Creative Future via Skype or phone.

