

The background features a large, abstract teal shape on the right side, with several overlapping, hand-drawn purple loops and lines that swirl around the central text area.

BBC **WRITERS**

ANNUAL REPORT
2025-2026

Welcome to BBC Writers



Jess Loveland
Head of New Writing for BBC Writers
& BBC Drama Commissioning

Welcome to our annual review of BBC Writers’ work across 2025/26. This year has been defined by the imagination, creative collaboration and hard work of the writers we’ve had the privilege to support. Across our hubs, programmes and partnerships, we continued our mission to discover, nurture and champion new and emerging voices from every part of the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Our Open Call remained a cornerstone of writer discovery, with over 6,000 scripts submitted. Our Scripted and Voices programmes once again offered in-depth development, industry insight and invaluable craft support to writers across the length and breadth of the UK. The Pilot scheme continued to elevate exceptional voices, providing opportunities to deepen professional relationships with the industry and the BBC Drama Commissioning team. It also offered the unique chance to be mentored by some of the most exciting writers working in the UK today.

A major highlight of the year was the launch of Long Story Short, our new short-form production offer for emerging writers, directors and producers. Landing on BBC Three and BBC iPlayer, the initiative showcases bold, distinctive new storytelling.

Thank you to the writers, partners and colleagues who make our work possible. Here’s to another year supporting extraordinary stories and storytellers!



Lindsay Salt
Director BBC Drama

“BBC Writers continues to be a vital engine for discovering bold new voices. This year’s work, especially the launch of Long Story Short, shows just how exciting the future of UK storytelling can be. I’m incredibly proud of the talent we’re supporting and the opportunities we’re creating for new writers at the heart of the BBC.”

Contents

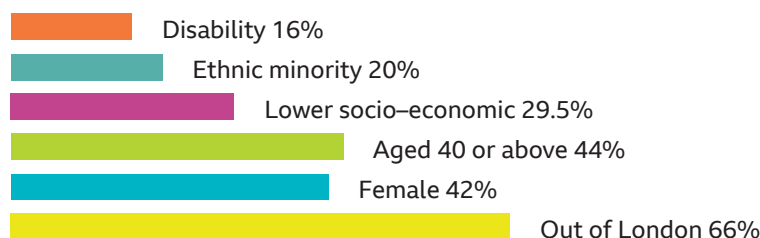
Welcome & Contents	2
The Year in Stats	3
Open Call	4
Voices	5
Scripted	6
Pilot	7
Long Story Short	8-9
Be Inspired	10
Out & About, News from our Alumni	11
The Year Ahead	12

The Year in Stats

BBC WRITERS
ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

BBC Writers takes the responsibility of monitoring our activity and writer development support seriously. Reporting in this way allows us to ensure we are truly reaching writers across the whole of the UK and helps us to identify future priority areas.

DIVERSITY FIGURES FOR SUBMISSIONS



Submissions to our opportunities via our online submissions system in the reporting period.

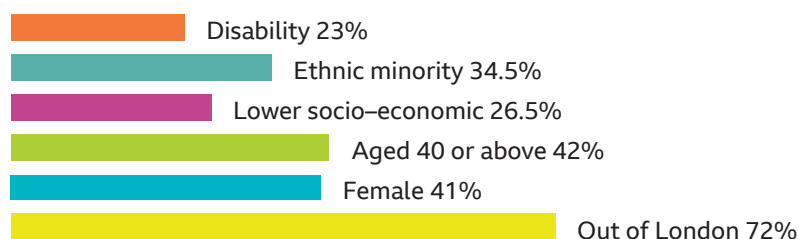


OUR WRITER GROUPS:



The following **VOICES** groups took place in 2025: Scotland, North and Midlands (England), Belfast (Northern and Republic of Ireland hub), Wales, London, South (England).

DIVERSITY FIGURES FOR OUR GROUPS



Our figures are derived from the most up-to-date data available. This is taken from self-reported and optional monitoring forms. We can't guarantee a 100% return rate.



Finding the writers

BBC Writers' Open Call is the BBC's main route for discovering new writing talent. Each Autumn, writers across the UK and Republic of Ireland are invited to submit one original script. Applicants must be eighteen or over, and scripts must be at least 30 pages, written in Drama or Comedy-Drama, for television, radio, theatre, or film.

All eligible scripts receive an initial ten-page read, with the strongest submissions taken forward for deeper assessment. The emphasis is on originality, a distinct voice, and a writer's long-term potential rather than immediate production prospects.

The programme has grown rapidly: the 2024/25 Open Call received 6,026 scripts, and the 2025/26 callout rose to a record 6,164. Each year, up to 85 writers are selected for the Scripted and Voices pathways.

The BBC seeks gripping stories, vivid dialogue, strong characters, and fresh perspectives – writing that can captivate, move, and spark the imagination.

6026

Submissions received
in Open Call closing
December 2024

+

6164

Submissions received
in Open Call closing
December 2025

Our Readers

BBC Writers is supported by around 25 freelance readers from across the industry. This team of script editors, writers, producers, literary managers and lecturers brings wide creative expertise across genres. Carefully chosen to reflect UK diversity, their work is guided, supported and quality-checked by senior editorial staff.



Bradley Down

Head of Development,
BBC Drama

“The BBC Writers' Open Call remains a cornerstone of our talent strategy in BBC Drama. At a moment when audiences are hungry for distinctive, original and ambitious storytelling, this initiative is essential in helping us uncover writers with bold ideas and unique perspectives - voices who may not otherwise find a route into the industry. It's one of the most important ways we ensure the future of British storytelling continues to be vibrant, diverse and creatively fearless.”

Find out how to submit a script to the Open Call: bbc.co.uk/writers/opportunities/open-call



Honing the skills

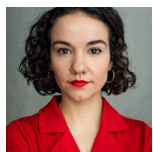
In 2025, our Voices development scheme supported 69 emerging writers from across the UK through six regional cohorts led by local BBC Writers hubs. Over six months, participants followed an intensive programme that offered a clear understanding of how the television industry works, with expert input delivered through masterclasses, craft workshops and focused roundtable sessions. The programme equipped writers with the essential skills and knowledge needed to progress in TV writing. Alongside this structured training, participants built strong peer networks through regular in-person meet-ups within their local groups. Throughout the scheme, each writer also developed and refined an original drama concept, resulting in a distinctive series idea and a valuable end-to-end creative experience.

NFTS

**NATIONAL
FILM AND
TELEVISION
SCHOOL**

Script Editing Support

Our Voices programme works closely with the National Film and Television School (NFTS), creating a collaborative space where emerging writers can refine and strengthen their projects. Each year, selected participants receive dedicated script-editing support from skilled NFTS trainees, who provide tailored guidance as writers shape their Voices projects through to at least a first-draft stage. In 2025, 16 writers benefitted from this dynamic partnership.



Sarah Agha

“The offer to join the BBC Writers scheme was the guidance I craved. This scheme was the perfect opportunity for me to try something new, at a time when I needed it most.”

Sarah outlines her Voices experience:
bbc.co.uk/writers/blog/my-experience-on-bbc-writers-voices

MIDLANDS & NORTH OF ENGLAND

Rachel Clynick,
Harriet Ghost,
Jack Benjamin
Gill, Laura
Harper, Emteaz
Hussain, Nicole
Joseph, Chris
O'Connor,
Lucy Roslyn,
Muj Shah, Tom
Smith, Mitesh
Soni, Laura
Waldren

SCOTLAND

Natalie
Ahmadzadeh,
Zoë Bullock,
Stephen Downs,
Will Evans,
Hannah Grego,
Philip Johnstone,
Jenny Knotts,
Jack MacGregor,
Joe McCann,
David Patterson

SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Tom Bibby,
Emily Blake,
David Cheung,
Elizabeth
Dorsett, Ruth
Dugdall, Felicity
Evans & Toby
Venables,
Rebecca Jade
Hammond, Kayla
Hendy, Ali May,
Sam Parker,
Fiona Pearce,
Ajay Sisodiya,
Ollie Tait

BELFAST HUB

Dean Conway,
Bridgid Galvin,
Basma Khalifa,
Gareth Lyons,
Robert Herbert
McClean, James
McCleary,
Brenda McNeill,
Tom Moran,
John Moriarty,
Joanne Ryan,
Rían Smith,
Sasha Smyth

WALES

Shôn Dale-
Jones, Owen
Davies, Lizzie
Fitzpatrick,
Oliver Gabe,
Niall Grant-
Rowlands, Tim
Green;
Brynach
Higginson,
Charlotte
James, Stacey
Lewis, Griff
Lynch, Sophie
Mackintosh

LONDON HUB

Awate Abdalla,
Sarah Agha,
James Appleby,
Sharmila
Chauhan, Jason
David; Jamie
Hewitt, Stephen
Hunt, Shane
ShayShay Konno,
Lydia Rui, Jake
Vithana

Mastering the craft



From autumn 2024 to early 2026, we were delighted to collaborate with a cohort of 12 Scripted writers who rose to the top of a highly competitive Open Call. They embarked on a year-long development journey designed to strengthen distinctive voices and prepare them for writing Television Drama. The programme supports early-career writers who demonstrate originality, ambition and strong storytelling instincts, but have yet to secure a professional TV credit. Throughout the year, participants took part in craft-focused workshops and industry-led sessions, gaining vital insight into the demands of television writing. A standout moment was a mock writers room for *Beyond Paradise*, led by Red Planet Pictures' founder Tony Jordan and Executive Producer Tim Key, offering an invaluable look at how a compelling series is built. Writers also worked closely with a script editor, developing their skills and producing an industry-ready spec script. Their imagination, commitment and progress showcase the remarkable potential of emerging UK talent.

Scripted Writers: Iman Boujelouah, Tiegna Byrne, Callum Cameron, Oliver Doone, Zia Holloway, Alannah Lewis, Jack Maraghy, Gary Mill, Himanshu Ojha, Paul Roberts, Cathriona Slammon, Mark Williams



Oliver Doone

"Getting on to BBC Scripted isn't the hard work done, it's only the beginning. But if you get your head down, show up, contribute, and learn as much as possible, it's all worth it. It is a goldmine of information, of opportunities, you just have to be willing to dig."



What's it like being part of the Scripted group? bbc.co.uk/writers/blog/bbc-writers-scripted



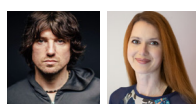
The next generation of series creators



Pilot is BBC Writers' flagship programme for discovering and developing exceptional screenwriting talent. Selected writers receive a paid commission to create the pilot episode of a potential new BBC series. In this cohort, 14 writers were commissioned to develop 12 projects, with two scripts co-funded by Screen Scotland. Each writer teamed up with a leading UK producer to shape an ambitious drama and deliver a finished script. Alongside this collaboration, participants received extensive support from BBC Writers, including expert-led sessions and one-to-one guidance from an experienced, hand-picked mentor.



Writer		Producer	Mentor
Alex Mathias		Lookout Point	Neil Cross
Ali Taylor		Mam Tor Productions	Rob Williams
Alvin Yu		New Pictures	Matthew Graham
Daniel Katanchian		Abbottvision	George Kay
Danny & Lauren McNamara		Two Cities Television	Neil Cross
Emma Ramsay		Synchronicity Films	Alice Nutter
Faebian Averies		Kudos	Anna Jordan
Lauren Bensted & Adam Grant		5 Acts Productions	Sophie Petzal
Matthew McDevitt		Hartwood Films	Alice Lowe
Paolo Chianta		Film Nation	Tony Roche
Sophia Chetin-Leuner		Greenacre Films	Rachel De-Lahay
Zak Zarafshan		Company Pictures	Armando Iannucci



Danny & Lauren McNamara

"The BBC Pilot Scheme gave us more than a polished script. It gave us confidence, craft, contacts, and friendships we'll keep for life."

Danny & Lauren share their Pilot experience: bbc.co.uk/writers/blog/pilot-scheme



Long Story Short represents the BBC at its most dynamic: championing new voices and shaping the future of British storytelling. Discover the seven films that bring this exciting new talent initiative to life.

Long Story Short films now available on iPlayer: bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m002qx98/long-story-short

Moving from script to screen

Long Story Short is a bold new talent initiative from BBC Writers, created to spotlight the next generation of UK screen storytellers. Designed for emerging writers, directors and producers, the programme offers a rare opportunity to take creative risks and create authored, ambitious short films destined for BBC Three and BBC iPlayer. Spanning all four nations of the UK, Long Story Short pairs fresh voices with local production companies supported by the BBC's Small Indie Fund to develop films rooted in place, perspective and imagination. The project is delivered in close collaboration with BBC Drama Commissioning, BBC Three, BBC iPlayer, BBC Scotland, BBC Northern Ireland and BBC Wales, with invaluable support from screen agency partners Creative Wales, North East Screen, Northern Ireland Screen and Screen Scotland.

The films enjoyed a premiere at the BFI IMAX in October 2025 before playing at a series of UK film festivals and launching on BBC Three and iPlayer in February 2026.

Beyond



Writer: Alex Mathias

Director: Martin Thomas

Production Company: Triongl

Screen Agency: Creative Wales

A shy teenager tries to fit into his new hometown on the night of their annual paranormal festival but finds himself marked for abduction.

Doppelgänger



Writer: Alison Carr

Director: Zak Harney

Production Company: Candle & Bell

Screen Agency: North East Screen

When ten-year old Josie Johns met her doppelgänger, it kicked off a decade of intense and bitter rivalry. Now an adult, Josie is about to confront her double, settle some scores, and take back control of her identity once and for all.

Jealous People are Ugly People



Writer & Director: Theo James Krekis

Production Company: The Fold

Consumed by his jealousy of his best friend's sudden career success, Vasily's resentment festers, feeding a dark, supernatural force within him.

Peak Male Excellence



Writer: Adam Grant

Director: Karimah Zakia Issa

Production Company: Joi Productions

Desperate to impress his crush, awkward fresher Rohan turns to an online masculinity coach for advice, but his quest for peak male excellence leads him to question if alpha status is all it's cracked up to be.

Pineapple



Writer: Rachelle Atalla

Director: Alia Ghafar

Production Company: Barry Crerar

Screen Agency: Screen Scotland

Lonely and disaffected twenty-something Mabel finds connection over a pineapple in the local supermarket.

Celebrate Long Story Short, a dynamic slate of seven short films created by BBC Writers alumni with regional indies, showcasing bold new UK storytelling and diverse perspectives destined for BBC iPlayer and BBC Three.

Privileged



Writer: Anthony Moriarty

Director: Naomi Waring

Production Company: Out of Orbit

Screen Agency: N. Ireland Screen

After a raw stand-up set earns aspiring comedian Tony a cancellation from his university's most powerful influencers, he is faced with a choice; either sanitise his material or find the courage to embrace his voice.

True Love and Wormholes



Writer: Dave Florez

Director: Annabel Vine

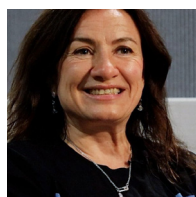
Production Company: Indefinite Films

Maggie's from the West Country; Craig's from the Future – and together they might just save the planet. He's funny, intense, and impossible to resist... but the closer Maggie gets, the more she suspects his story hides something darker. As their bond deepens, the danger escalates, smashing the boundaries between reality and delusion, monotony and wormholes, betrayal and True Love.

Watch the trailer and learn more:
bbc.co.uk/writers/blog/long-story-short-announced

Be Inspired: Reaching the writing community

BBC WRITERS
ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



Get inspiration and advice from our Be Inspired interviews. Recent additions include Pete McTighe, Joy Wilkinson, Sally Wainwright, Jackie Okwera, Emma Frost, Peter Foott, Mark Brotherhood, Ashley Storrie, Stephen Merchant and Russell T Davies.

Watch Be Inspired interviews:
bbc.co.uk/writers/resources/be-inspired

BBC Writers Online

Our website is the first port of call for the vast majority of people who engage with our work and consistently achieves around 3.5 million page views per year.

The website includes a wide range of advice to support writers at all levels of experience alongside information for anyone with a general interest in scriptwriting and the TV drama commissioning process.

Resources on the website include our blog, which is regularly updated with posts from writers, producers and other industry experts, covering advice, top tips, news about our opportunities and the writers who have taken part and insight into new dramas on the BBC.

Our online Script Library contains well-over 1000 scripts from BBC TV, Film, Radio and Childrens productions. It is one of the most comprehensive script libraries on the web. Recent additions include Wolf Hall, Mr Loverman, Showtrial, A Good Girl's Guide to Murder and This City is Ours.

The Opportunities page includes a continually updated listing of free-to-enter writing opportunities from the BBC and across the industry, giving deadlines to meet and tangible outcomes. Many writers have achieved their first success or commission through an opportunity they have spotted on the page.

Read the Blog

bbc.co.uk/writers/blog

Explore the Script Library

bbc.co.uk/writers/scripts

Discover Opportunities

bbc.co.uk/writers/opportunities

Follow us on Socials



Twitter/X
twitter.com/bbcwritersroom



Facebook
facebook.com/BBCWriters



Instagram
instagram.com/bbcwriters



LinkedIn
linkedin.com/showcase/bbc-writers



YouTube
youtube.com/channel/UCF7bHB3R2Chazr1NmFvGjg



Engaging with the UK's creative talent

This year, BBC Writers has once again travelled across the UK to meet emerging writers where they live and work. From festivals in Wales and packed events in Northern Ireland to creative hubs and colleges in Scotland, as well as showcases and gatherings across the South of England, the Midlands and the North, we've spent the year engaging directly with writers in their own communities. Whether running a workshop in a seaside arts centre, joining a panel at a busy film festival, or hosting a round table with local playwrights, each visit has revealed the depth of talent thriving nationwide. Showing up on writers' home ground has enriched conversations and strengthened connections, demonstrating the BBC's commitment to supporting local creative voices. It has truly been a year of national reach and celebration.

News from our Alumni



Our writers' successes

Alumni have contributed to an exceptional range of scripted projects this year, from returning dramas and new BBC originals to writers' rooms for major global streamers, bringing distinctive voices and fresh creative vision to every commission. A standout achievement is *Lost Boys and Fairies*, co-created by Daf James, which won both the International Emmy for Best Mini-Series and a BAFTA Cymru award for Best Writer. Equally significant is Harry Smyth's BAFTA-winning factual drama *The Jury: A Murder Trial*, a project he co-created and continues to expand, illustrating the breadth of alumni influence across genres.

Many writers have celebrated major firsts, from original greenlights to high-profile episodic credits. James Price secured his debut original series with *Grams*, while Sharma Angel-Walfall's episode of *Doctor Who* marked an important milestone on one of the BBC's flagship shows.

Film momentum has also accelerated. Shannon Welby's recognition by BFI NETWORK and Screen Ireland reflects an increasingly international alumni presence. Elham Ehas added a Raindance Best UK Short win, while others, including Chloe White on the 2025 Brit List, gained industry-wide attention.

Together, these achievements highlight the lasting impact of the BBC Writers model: supporting bold voices, building craft, and nurturing sustainable, thriving careers.

25

At the time of publication 25 recent alumni of BBC Writers have projects in active development on the BBC Drama slate.

The Year Ahead

BBC WRITERS

2026
2027

What we're excited about in the year ahead:

OPEN CALL will return in November 2026 looking for the most exciting new writers for our **SCRIPTED** and **VOICES** programmes.

We'll be welcoming over 80 new writers into our **SCRIPTED** and **VOICES** groups for 26/27.

We'll have the pleasure of working with a new group of writers from Bradford District as part of our brand-new **WRITE ACROSS BRADFORD** initiative.

We'll be out and about across the country meeting writers and attending events and festivals.

And we'll be announcing new partnerships and updates about **PILOT**, the **WRITERS ACCESS GROUP** and **LONG STORY SHORT** series 2 in the months to come!

Scan the QR code for a downloadable version of the Annual Report

