

Role Description:

The Alternative School Writer in Residence (freelance)

Contract

Freelance

November 2024 – August 2025

2.5 days per week during term time (2 days per week delivery (Mondays and Wednesdays)
+ 0.5 days planning/prep)

Fee

£12,000 (paid in monthly instalments (10months), inclusive of prep time)

The Edinburgh International Book Festival and The Alternative School at Spartans Community Foundation are seeking to appoint a Writer in Residence. Following a highly successful residency of author Chris Barkley at the school for the last two academic years.

The Writer in Residence will engage with the young people, aged 14-16, on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis, in diverse ways, to learn what stories they have to tell, what ideas of place and neighbourhood they may have, and to support them to share these stories and ideas as they choose.

At the Book Festival, 'writer' encapsulates a diverse range of creative literary outputs: novelist, poet, non-fiction writer, illustrator, comic creator, spoken word artist etc, and producing work for all ages of audiences and readers. For this role we are particularly interested in applications from writers who have experience of working with young people who face barriers to education and/or trauma-experienced young people.

Edinburgh International Book Festival Communities Programme

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Communities Programme brings together the very best from groups and organisations across the country with the energy and excitement of the August Book Festival. Produced in collaboration with a variety of partners, this programme of residencies, festivals and one-off events brings authors, artists

and audiences together to inspire each other and to be inspired, to share stories and experiences, and bring books to life for people of all ages in their own communities.

A key aspect of the Communities Programme is its synergetic relation to the August Book Festival's programme. As such the creative work developed in this project takes inspiration from and ultimately informs the Edinburgh International Book Festival's August programme in its local and international celebration of books, words and ideas.

To learn more about our Communities Programme visit our blog:

<https://ontheroad.edbookfest.co.uk>

Spartans Alternative School

The Senior Alternative School provides young people who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education or who may find school a challenge, an alternative place to learn, grow and develop. Students attend the Alternative School two times per week. Their development journey includes 1:1 support on subjects including Maths and English in addition to physical activity, Cookery, Art and Music sessions. Therefore, interdisciplinary learning approaches can work really well. There is a focus on self-reflection, personal development and fostering a growth mindset.

The Alternative School operates 'free to choose' options with emphasis on practical learning through volunteering and work experience opportunities. Every young person is mentored by a Spartans Community Foundation youth worker and is offered mental health counselling from a psychotherapist who is part of the team. Group reflective sessions are offered across the year to support staff and help prevent them experiencing vicarious trauma.

The Role

We are seeking a writer who has experience of working within educational or youth work settings, who relishes working with young people from varied backgrounds, and who has the ability to work in a creative and responsive way to ideas from the Book Festival, The Alternative School and participants. This will involve working closely with The Alternative School staff, supporting the emerging shape and content of the programme, as well as working with visiting artists.

Whilst creative writing and engagement with literature in all its forms is the backbone of this work, writers must be open to - and experienced in - embedding other creative mediums within the project, such as music, film, photography etc. Furthermore, the writer must be willing to take on a pastoral supporting role, which may involve engaging with the young people in activities other than creating writing, for example sport.

The legacy of this project is vital to its success. As the work progresses, we will explore the most appropriate means of producing and disseminating the project's creative output beyond festival events to ensure continued reach and impact.

You will collaborate with all parties to devise the most appropriate form of showcasing the creative work, both within the school, and then subsequently at the 2025 Edinburgh International Book Festival in August (for the last two years we have presented a showcase event at the Book Festival).

The role will involve relevant training and support/supervision provided by The Alternative School Manager. The Book Festival will contract the Writer in Residence, provide general support, liaise with the Writer in Residence regarding scope and direction of the project and provide input regarding any creative outputs for the project.

Key responsibilities

- To enable the young people to have their voices heard and their creative work to be nurtured and valued throughout the project
- To plan and deliver project activities in a timely and professional manner, in cooperation with partners and participants as required
- To collaborate closely with the Book Festival, The Alternative School, participants and supporting authors and artists to evolve the content and public manifestation of the project
- To suggest possible additional artists or artistic elements to support the young peoples' emerging ideas
- To work with the Book Festival's Marketing and Communications team and others to find ways to creatively tell the ongoing story of the project and its participants
- To write pieces and create resources for the Book Festival's On The Road blog and Learning Site on regular basis
- To participate in the project's evaluation process, and to provide regular feedback to the Book Festival and its partners.

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience of working with those who face barriers to education and/or trauma-experienced young people to develop creative writing, creative thinking and to encourage self-expression
- Experience of working with young people of varying levels of abilities and perspectives
- Experience of working closely and collaboratively with other authors or artists
- Open and flexible attitude to evolving project
- Excellent communicator who can work with and represent the project to various stakeholders

- A creative thinker who can provide support in troubleshooting and creative problem solving
- Commitment to equal opportunities and social inclusion; tolerance and respect of difference
- Generosity of spirit and a willingness to learn from others
- The post-holder must be a full member of Disclosure Scotland's Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. The Book Festival can support the successful candidate with this process if they are yet to become a member.

Desirable

- Experience of working across different literary genres e.g. poetry, short fiction
- Experience of collaborating
- Experience/appreciation of cultural programming across different art forms
- Access to own car/transport
- Experience and/or training in trauma informed practice
- Experience and/or training in supporting autistic or ADHD learners
- Experience and/or training in supporting learner with ASN such as dyslexia
- Lived experience relevant to the post

Equal Opportunities

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is an equal opportunities employer, an Investor in People and a Real Living Wage employer. Our work is framed by a commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The Book Festival is a working environment where everyone is treated fairly, and our differences are celebrated as strengths. We encourage applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply. If you have any specific access requirements, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your needs.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit the following to jobs@edbookfest.co.uk:

- CV
- 2 examples of your creative writing /or 2 examples of recent projects or productions.
- Cover letter outlining how you meet the person specification and including a 250-word proposal on how you would deliver the project – exploring themes of Citizenship, Belonging, Place and Identity.

Closing date for applications: **Friday 27 September, 12noon**

Interviews will be held at Spartans Community Foundation: **Friday 4 October**

If you have any questions about the role not answered by the above, please contact Noëlle Cobden on jobs@edbookfest.co.uk.