



An **All Stories success story**: the mentoring and outreach programme for underrepresented children's book writers secures **record Arts Council funding** for its extensive UK-wide 2024 programme, while celebrating agent representation and/or book deals for ten of its former mentees.

London, for immediate release, 00:01, 10 May 2024:

ALL STORIES, the development programme for underrepresented writers (people of colour, disabled, neurodiverse, LGBTQ+, working class and socio-economically marginalised), **is now open for its third round of mentorships in 2024**. With a focus on writers of **picture books and young fiction**, the **ten authors chosen** will work closely with an editor-mentor, developing their work ready for agent and publisher submission through six months of comprehensive 1:1 support alongside practical workshops delivered by industry editors.

With the ambition to make a difference, All Stories continues to break down barriers for underrepresented writers by focusing its support on those unable to afford to pay for creative development. This year, All Stories has secured headline-funding from Arts Council England – with its largest grant so far enabling a UK-wide programme of activity – alongside ALCS (Authors' Licencing and Collecting Society) and Inclusive Books for Children*. Keen to extend its reach to more writers from underrepresented backgrounds, All Stories encourages applications from anyone who is interested in taking their writing to the next level.

With eight previous mentees having secured agent representation, and five with book deals – tangible success for over a third of all participants in less than three years – All Stories' focus is to build on its success in helping talented authors of the future access crucial development opportunities on their journey to publication.

Catherine Coe, All Stories founder and director, says: *“All Stories has been helping break down barriers for underrepresented writers since 2021, with incredible achievements for our mentees in a short space of time. I’m overjoyed that our funders have recognised the importance of our work so we can continue the success story and help more talented writers achieve their dreams. It could be you – your story, your talent, could be the next window, mirror or door to a young reader. We’re here to give underrepresented writers the confidence and tools to navigate and thrive in the industry, and to impassion and assist the industry in continuing the changes it has begun to make on the road to becoming fully inclusive and diverse.”*

Patrice Lawrence, All Stories patron, adds: *“I come from a working class background and was the first in my family to be born in the UK. I had no idea how publishing worked even when I was eventually published! It’s a privilege to be part of such a successful initiative that supports people to realise their writing ambitions.”*



Rashmi Sirdeshpande, All Stories patron, says: *“The importance of diversity in publishing is no longer a debate. We know it matters. Programmes like All Stories that help us get there by finding and nurturing underrepresented voices and opening doors, making this tough and often opaque industry more accessible. It shows writers who need that extra support and development and that they absolutely do belong in this world. That sense of belonging is everything.”*

For further information and the application form, go [HERE](#).

Applications close: 11.59pm 24th June 2024.

* Live chats with Catherine Coe and Patrice Lawrence answering questions from interested writers will take place on Twitter/X on 5th June @ 8pm and Insta Live on 8th June @ 10am. No question too big or too small!

Follow using #AllStories24 on [Twitter/X](#) and [Instagram](#).

In addition to the tailored mentorships, **All Stories will also offer a series of sixteen workshops intended as an introduction to writing children’s books.** Venues will be chosen across the UK in order to reach the writers of the future who are looking for advice, insight and a supportive writing community.

Libraries, community venues and organisations are encouraged to apply to host a fully funded workshop, which will be presented by an award-winning author from an underrepresented background living in the region.

Workshops will take place between September 2024 and February 2025, on a date to be agreed with the venue and workshop presenter. In order to further assist local writers and provide ongoing support, All Stories will provide a facilitator to establish a long-term writing group in each venue.

All Stories will offer four virtual workshops (including one with BSL interpretation) for those unable to attend an event in person, presented by award-winning neurodiverse author, Jane Elson, taking place between August and November. These will be followed by online writing support groups, established especially for the workshop participants.

For more information on hosting a workshop and the application form, go [HERE](#).

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

* Catherine Coe, founder, and Patrice Lawrence and Rashmi Sirdeshpande (patrons) are all available for interview, or comment.

Catherine Coe is a children’s book editor and author. From a working class background, Catherine created All Stories from her determination to improve diversity in children’s books. She has 23 years’ experience as an editor, and was Senior Commissioning Editor at Hachette

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Children's Books before going freelance in 2011. As well as editing for a wide variety of clients – publishers, literary agents and writers – Catherine also teaches at Anglia Ruskin University. She's the author of over 40 children's books, including the bestselling Blossom Wood series (published by Scholastic).

Patrice Lawrence is an award-winning writer. Her books have been shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award and Carnegie Award, won the Bookseller YA Prize and Waterstones Prize for Older Children's Fiction, the Bristol Crimefest YA Prize twice, the Woman and Home Teen Drama Award, the inaugural Jhalak Children's Award for Writers of Colour and the Little Rebels Awards for Radical Children's Fiction. Patrice is a seasoned reviewer of picture books and early readers for Letterbox Library and has judged many book prizes including the Little Rebels Award and the Queen's Knickers illustrated book award. She has been awarded an MBE for Literature and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Rashmi Sirdeshpande is an award-winning children's author and BookTrust Writer in Residence from March–August 2024. She writes uplifting picture books and illustrated non-fiction and her books include *Never Show a T-Rex a Book* (illustrated by Diane Ewen), *Dadaji's Paintbrush* (illustrated by Ruchi Mhasane), and *Amazing Asia: An encyclopaedia of an epic continent* (illustrated by Jason Lyon). A former World Book Day author, Rashmi's books have been published around the world and featured in national and international newspapers. She has won a number of awards, including the Diverse Book Awards and the Society of Authors Queen's Knickers Award, which celebrates "outstanding" picture books.

* All Stories is funded by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND, ALCS (Authors' Licencing and Collecting Society), INCLUSIVE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN, and supported in kind by SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, UK), THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE, PEN TO PRINT/*WRITE ON!*, MEGAPHONE and the POCKET PUBLICIST.



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ENGLAND**

Arts Council England are the national development agency for creativity and culture. They have set out their strategic vision in *Let's Create* that by 2030 they want England to be a country in

which the creativity of each person is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. Arts Council England invest public money from government and the National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.



The **Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)** is a not-for-profit organisation started by writers for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity; ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents over 120,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £700million to writers.



Inclusive Books for Children is a charity with a free website for families that helps them easily choose books for a more



inclusive bookshelf. They showcase stories that represent all types of family and don't draw on gender stereotypes or negative tropes. They feature books with a variety of ethnicities, positive images of disabilities and different identities, and celebrate Own-Voice authors and illustrators. The IBC website runs in parallel with their provision of funding to other not-for-profit organisations also working to improve inclusivity in children's books, and access to those books.

* Virtual All Stories workshops dates are:

- [Wednesday 14th August: 7–9pm](#)
- [Saturday 7th September: 10am–12noon](#)
- [Tuesday 8th October: 7–9pm – with BSL interpretation](#)
- [Saturday 2nd November: 10am–12noon](#)

* Freelance editors providing mentorships are: Natascha Biebow, Ruth Redford, Jo Collins, Barry Timms, Kathy Webb, Catherine Coe. In-house editors running mentee webinars are: Simone Taylor (PRH), Jasmine Richards (Storymix), Anne Marie Ryan (Hachette), Ellie Farmer (PRH), Libby Hamilton (Rocket Bird Books), Ken Wilson-Max (HarperCollins), Joe Marriot (PRH).

* An event in partnership with Megaphone connecting the mentees with publishers and agents and celebrating the programme's success is planned for autumn 2024; further details will be announced.

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[**www.allstories.org.uk**](http://www.allstories.org.uk)

For any interview requests or further information, please contact Nina Douglas on: [nina@ninadouglaspr.com**](mailto:nina@ninadouglaspr.com)**