

All Stories, a unique mentorship programme for underrepresented children's book writers, announces its first cohort of mentees

Fourteen aspiring authors who cannot afford to pay for editorial support will receive mentorships from expert editors, thanks to funding from Arts Council England¹ and ALCS²

The inaugural group of writers are from a range of underrepresented backgrounds, including BAME, LGBTQ, living with a disability and socio-economically marginalised. They are writing in a wide array of age groups and genres, including imagination-busting picture books, anarchic comedies, middle grade mysteries and YA thrillers – often inspired by their own background. Each writer will be mentored for six months by a freelance editor, whose combined experience totals over 250 years. The writers will attend carefully curated webinars by top in-house editors³ on topics including voice and accessing the industry as an underrepresented writer. They will also receive a year's membership to SCBWI⁴.

The writers and their mentors are: **Melissa Abraham** (picture books), mentored by Jon Appleton; **Dawn Amesbury** (middle grade), mentored by Jon Appleton; **Tracy Curran** (picture books), mentored by Natascha Biebow; **Jo Dearden** (picture books), mentored by Helen Mortimer; **Alison Dunne** (middle grade), mentored by Jenny Glencross; **Hannah Ekekwe** (young adult), mentored by Genevieve Herr; **Rebecca Ferrier** (young adult), mentored by Tilda Johnson; **Ikuko Ishiwaki** (picture books), mentored by Niamh Mulvey; **Suad Kamardeen** (young adult), mentored by Emma Roberts; **Mitchell Kamen** (middle grade), mentored by Lucy Rogers; **L Kerfoot** (middle grade), mentored by Sara Grant; **Reba Khatun** (middle grade), mentored by Kathy Webb; **Tasmia Tahia** (young adult), mentored by Nicki Marshall; **Thomas Thomasson** (middle grade), mentored by Catherine Coe.

All Stories' founder, children's book editor Catherine Coe, said:

"The industry reaction to the launch of All Stories in March was incredible – huge thanks to everyone who has supported it. The standard of the applications was very high, and while I wish we could give more people such opportunities, I am thrilled that this first cohort of talented writers will receive extensive support to develop their craft – support they would not have been able to access otherwise. My hope is that the programme helps to break down long-held barriers of privilege and background in the industry, improving the diversity of authors and representation in books for young readers."

Patron, award-winning author Patrice Lawrence, said:

"The quality of entries was so high, such a strong reminder of how many talented writers just need that little bit of extra support to help them into publishing. Congratulations to everyone!"

For further information:

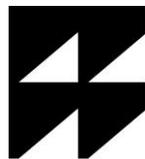
Visit www.allstories.org.uk or contact Catherine Coe: catherine@allstories.org.uk / 07971 174645

Notes to editors:

1. [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.
2. 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 113,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £570 million to writers (alcs.co.uk).
3. The in-house editors delivering webinars are: Amina Youssef (Commissioning Editor, Simon & Schuster Children's Books), Ben Horsen (Publisher, Penguin Random House), Eishar Brar (Editorial Director, Knights Of), Jasmine Richards (Director, Storymix), Libby Hamilton (Editorial Director, Anderson Press), Linas Alsenas (Executive Editor, Scholastic UK) and Rebecca Hill (Editorial Director, Usborne).
4. The [Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators](#) (SCBWI) is the only international professional organisation for authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults. Founded in 1971 by a group of Los Angeles-based writers, the SCBWI is a non-profit with over 22,000 members in around 80 regions around the world. The British Isles region offers professional development, networking and marketing opportunities, events, retreats, conferences, critique groups, awards, competitions, and numerous publications.
5. The mentorships will begin in September 2021 and end in February 2022.



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