



Writers aged over 40 invited to apply for national award

Scottish Book Trust, the independent national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, has announced today (Wednesday 17 July) that the Next Chapter Award 2020 is open for applications. Now in its sixth year, the award seeks submissions from talented yet unpublished writers over the age of 40.

The Next Chapter Award supports an emerging writer for whom finding time and space to write has proved especially challenging. Developing a specific piece of work to publication standard will be the central aim of the award and applicants must demonstrate genuine potential for publication.

Run by Scottish Book Trust, the award provides a £2000 bursary; nine months of mentoring from a writer or industry professional; a two-week retreat at Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre; training in PR, social media and performance; and the opportunity to showcase work to publishers and agents.

Gail Honeyman, recipient of the inaugural Next Chapter Award in 2014, went on to sign a seven-figure publishing deal for her debut novel. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* was published in 2017 and has since sold two million copies – making it the best-selling book of 2018. It has also won several top awards and been optioned for a film by Reese Witherspoon's Hollywood company.

The winner of Next Chapter Award 2019, Samina Chaudhry, is currently working on a novel, *Half-Woman*, which is inspired by her experience of growing-up in different places and the juxtaposition of different societies. Since winning the award, Samina has been working closely with her mentor, novelist and former literary editor of Scotland on Sunday, Andrew Crumey, to develop her novel.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said:

"Turning your attention to writing can be difficult at any age, but this award recognises the specific challenges writers aged 40 and over face. As well as public recognition, the prize offers specific support to help the awardee develop their work towards publication.

"We are delighted to be running this award for the sixth year. It reflects the high standard of creativity and range of talent in Scotland, and we encourage writers to apply for this excellent opportunity."

Samina Chaudhry, winner of the Next Chapter Award 2019, said: "The Next Chapter Award has been an absolute inspiration, whether in terms of writing or freeing up headspace at my writing retreat at Moniack Mhor. Having recently had a



very positive introductory meeting with my mentor, Andrew Crumey, and received thoughtful insight, I cannot appreciate enough the support given by Scottish Book Trust in setting up these relationships, making me so look forward to the way ahead!"

The award is open to poets, novelists, authors of narrative non-fiction and children's authors who are 40 years of age or above. The closing date is Wednesday 18 September 2019 at midday. Visit scottishbooktrust.com for more information.

Ends

Notes to Editors

For all press queries, please contact PR and Marketing Manager, Keara Donnachie:

Keara.donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com or 0131 524 0184.

Previous winners of the Next Chapter Award:

Gail Honeyman (2014)

Robert Neil Fraser (2016)

Julie Rea (2017)

Ryan O'Connor (2018)

Samina Chaudhry (2019)

Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is an independent national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

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Creative Scotland

In addition to general fundraising, Scottish Book Trust receives Creative Scotland support through Regular Funding. Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com. Follow us [@creativescots](https://twitter.com/creativescots) and facebook.com/CreativeScotland