**Writing the Northern Powerhouse: Evaluating the Northern Writers’ Awards as a Potential Model of Intervention for Addressing Regional Representation in the ‘London-centric’ UK Literary Industry**

Professor Katy Shaw

Department of English and Creative Writing, Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK.

**Email:** katy3.shaw@northumbria.ac.uk

**Abstract**

Despite the UK government’s Northern Powerhouse agenda, the UK literary industry remains staunches focused on a predominantly London-base. When it comes to Northern writers, representations of the North in contemporary literature and Northern voices on the stage, small and big screens, UK government has suggested that the literary industry is guilty of persistently underrepresenting the 55.4 million members of the public who live outside the capital city. This research adopts a case study approach to this problem, examining one regional creative industry award, the Northern Writers’ Awards (NWAs) as a potential model of intervention for enhancing participation, professional development and talent pipelines of Northern writers to the national literary industry. The research analyses how and why the NWAs: develop creative knowledge exchange to create career development opportunities for creative talent through partnership-based training and knowledge exchange; retain the economic impact of regional creative talent to improve the economy of the North by retaining and developing creative talent within the region; and enhance diversity in creative talent to address issues of representation and diversity by reaching writers from all backgrounds in the North.

**Keywords:** writing; publishing; literary; award; economic; creative.

**Disclosure statement:** No financial interest or benefit to the author has arisen from the direct applications of this research.

**Author Biography:** Professor Shaw leads research into twenty-first century writings at Northumbria University, UK. Her research interests include literary prize culture and regional writing, twenty-first century literature, especially working class literature, and cultural representations of post-industrial regeneration. She has produced two books on crime author David Peace, a monograph on representations of the Credit Crunch in contemporary culture, and a collection on the teaching of twenty-first century genre fiction. Her latest book *Hauntology* (2018) explores the persistent role of the past in the present of contemporary English Literature. She is a public intellectual, literary festival host and media presenter.

Writing the Northern Powerhouse: Evaluating the Northern Writers’ Awards as a Potential Model of Intervention for Addressing Regional Representation in the ‘London-centric’ UK Literary Industry

Despite the UK government’s Northern Powerhouse agenda, the UK literary industry remains staunches focused on a predominantly London-base. When it comes to Northern writers, representations of the North in contemporary literature and Northern voices on the stage, small and big screens, UK government has suggested that the literary industry is guilty of persistently underrepresenting the 55.4 million members of the public who live outside the capital city. This research adopts a case study approach to this problem, examining one regional creative industry award, the Northern Writers’ Awards (NWAs) as a potential model of intervention for enhancing participation, professional development and talent pipelines of Northern writers to the national literary industry. The research analyses how and why the NWAs: develop creative knowledge exchange to create career development opportunities for creative talent through partnership-based training and knowledge exchange; retain the economic impact of regional creative talent to improve the economy of the North by retaining and developing creative talent within the region; and enhance diversity in creative talent to address issues of representation and diversity by reaching writers from all backgrounds in the North.

Keywords: writing; publishing; literary; award; economic; creative.

The UK literary industry—from publishing to book sales, author agencies to literature festivals—is one of the country’s most successful in terms of the breadth, depth and quality of the content it publishes and the multiple ways in which it brings that content to market. As a creative industry, the literary market does not stand alone, but rather operates with and significantly contributes to the success and vitality of other UK creative industries. By providing the source material for television, film, theatre and musicals, the UK literary industry helps to reduce the risk and increase the success of creative productions, as well as exporting new creative literary works to the rest of the world. With significant physical and digital income, and a key role in promoting culture and wellbeing, the UK literary industry is booming in the twenty-first century.

However, despite the UK government’s Northern Powerhouse agenda—a strategy designed to boost the Northern economy by investing in skills, innovation, and culture, as well as devolving significant powers and budgets to the North (HM Government 2018)—the UK literary industry remains staunches focused on a predominantly London-base. When it comes to Northern writers, representations of the North in literature and Northern voices on the stage, small and big screens, UK government has suggested that the literary industry is guilty of persistently underrepresenting the 55.4 million members of the public who live outside the capital city. The need to encourage new works and voices and to improve access for new talent and ideas has been identified by a host of independent organisations to ensure that the North remains a place where those with the right skills are able and want to come to live and work, and to develop the diversity of the domestic market so we it can share new ideas and voices with the wider nation and the rest of the world.

The APWG (All Party Writers Group—a cross party group examining UK publishing and issues of representation) in UK Parliament, the Society of Authors and the Association of Authors’ Agents have all stated a need to improve the visibly and pipeline of writing talent from the North of England, and have appealed for models of successful interventions to profile emerging and aspiring Northern writers. In 2016, the head of Penguin Random House, the biggest publisher in the UK, also gave a public lecture in which he revealed his fear that UK publishing risks 'becoming irrelevant' due to its ongoing failure to represent writers from the UK’s regions. Welson declared that this lack of regional diversity ‘is a real issue […] we have been slow, we have failed to reflect the society we live in. We have to address it. There are amazing writers out there who we aren’t commissioning. The whole industry needs to change’. Moreover, Welson argued that refocusing the UK literary industry beyond the confines of the M25 also has profound economy rationale, that it is ‘not just the right thing to do, but it is in our commercial interest—we’re always looking for new readers, and we’re conscious that there’s an incredible talent pool we’re not accessing’ (Welton 2016).

In an open letter addressed to ‘the London-centric literary industry’ published in UK literary industry bible *The Bookseller* in 2018, the Northern Fiction Alliance furthered these arguments, by suggesting that the UK literary industry must explore ways to ‘better reflect its readers and society’ by exploring ways of profiling more regional writers. Their letter complains that ‘publishing—and the arts more widely—should be in the business of bringing in perspectives from the peripheries; yet it is one of the most centralised and metropolitan of all cultural industries’. It proposes that the industry examine ways of tackling this ‘monoculture’ and the important question of ‘how much talent do we lose because, for a lot of people, London is too expensive, too far away, or, frankly, too chaotic to move to?’ The letter ends in a series of recommendations, including a plea for UK publishing to ‘Commit to publishing more regional writers as part of your editorial programme, and develop a strategy’ to reach new writers outside the capital (NFA 2018).

These concerns were echoed Arts Council England, the biggest funder of the literary industry in the UK. In 2017, Arts Council England commissioned a ‘Literature in the 21st Century’ report that identified several tensions created by a UK literary industry environment that is still predominantly ‘concentrated on London. The major publishers are in London. All but one of the Independent Alliance are in London. The newspapers and reviews are based in London. Decisions are made in London’ (Arts Council England 2017, 36). Arguing that this London-centric approach remains a problematic ‘centrifugal force in literary writing’ (Arts Council England 2017, 35), it suggests that one of the ‘key challenges’ of the contemporary period is ‘opening up’ the UK literary industry to voices and perspectives from beyond the capital city. The report stresses that ‘there is, undoubtedly, a need for more support and new models of support’ (Arts Council England 2017, 52) for writers trying to establish themselves in the UK literary sector and concludes with the warning that, even in the twenty-first century, the UK literary industry continues to be dominated by ‘insider networks’ and that ‘breaking into these still proves tough for many’ (2017, 3) writers who happen to reside outside the capital. In their statement that ‘The Arts Council believes that the North should be a place where artists can live and work without feeling that they need to move elsewhere in the country to gain success’ (Arts Council England 2018), it also argued that any creative industry can not address the culture and wellbeing of society if its focus is predominantly on only half of the country.

Since this problem was brought into the national spotlight, critical focus has centred on what forms of support might work to develop a representative literary industry, to enable the publication of a broad range of viable alternative voices, and to retain creative talent in the Northern regions to boost the local economy. This research attempts to address this question by adopting a case study approach, examining one such regional creative industry award—the Northern Writers’ Awards (NWAs)—as a potential intervention model in retaining regional creative talent and helping the UK literary industry better reflect the diversity of our country. As a result, the research underpinning the following article analyses how and why the NWAs: develop creative knowledge exchange to create career development opportunities for creative talent through partnership-based training and knowledge exchange; retain the economic impact of regional creative talent to improve the economy of the North by retaining and developing creative talent within the region; enhance diversity in creative talent to address issues of representation and diversity by reaching writers from all backgrounds in the North. The article concludes with a consideration of the extent to which these annual work-in-progress literary awards for writers from the North of England (as defined by Arts Council England 2014) might offer a potential model for enhancing participation, professional development and talent pipelines of writers to the national literary industry.

**The Role of Awards in the UK Literary Industry**

The new millennium has witnessed the rise of a new literary community, an eclectic collective of tastemakers and trend setters that collectively combine to shape the field of contemporary literature. From authors to agents, publishers to booksellers and critics to book clubs, the digital age has turned everyone into a critic of contemporary writings. Within this dynamic environment, literary prizes, awards and lists fuse the shared interests of the cultural and the economic in their influencing role over the ways in which new fictions are produced, distributed and read. This context is essential for understanding the evolution and impact of the NWAs across the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Alongside the rise of literary agents, the commodification and celebritization of literature created by the growth of a literary prize culture in the UK quickly established such awards as playing a “crucial role one of the forces that come to influence notions of cultural value and literariness” (Squires 2004, 97). As a series of framing devices—each with its own longlist, shortlist, odds and bets, profiles and interviews, podcasts and ceremonies—the increasing number and variety of prizes, awards and lists have continued to expand in the new millennium. Reflecting on this rise, James English claims that somewhere in the world a new literary prize or award is created every six hours (2005, 20).

Literary prizes also enjoy impact beyond the realm of the economic. As Ivor Indyk states, for writers, literary prizes function ‘as the last bastion in this world for the literary recognition that is withheld by the marketplace’ (Indyk 2016). In the twenty-first century, literary awards generate new conversations and subject positions, bringing the literary into the focus of popular attention. The role of literary prize culture in the formation of the field of popular fiction is vital, as is their disruptive function is problematizing boundaries between the commercial and the literary, between high and low art, the critical and the popular. While the remit of each prize differs, they all seek to differentiate in an increasingly competitive field and recognise quality, creativity and innovation in new writings. Literary prize culture has the power to shape a canon of contemporary literary canon, initiate debates about the future of new writing and offer a timely health check on the current condition of contemporary fiction. As well as enhancing and extending the production, creation and survival of publishing houses and the literary industry in a new digital age, literary awards and their matrix of admissions criteria and judging frameworks bravely make the otherwise ‘unfashionable statement that there is still such a thing as literary writing and that it is alive and well’ (Merritt 2003).

At the start of the new millennium, over 600 literary prizes already existed in Europe (Squires 2004, 38). However, as cultural award critics James English highlights, ‘there is no form of cultural capital so ubiquitous, so powerful, so widely talked about, and yet so little explored by scholars as the cultural prize’ (English 2002, 109). British publishing studies scholar Claire Squires has been at the forefront of research into literary prize culture in Europe. She argues that ‘research into literary prizes can potentially be extremely pertinent in the understanding of the material and ideological conditions of the production and reception of literature and literary value’ (Squires 2004, 37). Underlining the fact that impact analyses should not begin and end with the economic, Squires argues for ‘the vital role of prizes in the creation of communities of writers’ (2004, 37) and highlights that the impact of literary prizes on writers remains a comparatively ‘undeveloped’ area of research.

The NWAs have been hosted by New Writing North, the UK’s biggest writing development agency, since the year 2000. The NWAs offer work-in-progress prizes for writers based in the North of England. With high profile literary judges, and previous winners including Benjamin Myers, Carys Davies and Andrew Hankinson, the NWAs are now recognized as a proven identifier of emerging writing talent in the UK. The NWAs have supported hundreds of writers in the North of England to develop creative projects and connect with the writing industry. The awards support both new and established writers to develop their work towards publication, and for more established writers to buy time to write and to support the development of new work. Although the suite of prizes offered by the NWAs has evolved across the years of its operation, its umbrella title has become an established shorthand for the range of its annual writing accolades. Today, the NWAs celebrate the best emerging talent across the North and supporting writers to develop their original and exciting work.

**Evaluating Awards as Intervention**

In her own survey of studies into the impact of cultural awards, Squires recommends that any research into literary prizes must consider ‘both quantitative and qualitative’ data, and ‘pay attention to the histories and development of individual prizes’ and how these connect to ‘the literary industry and culture in general’, as well as to wider ‘book prize culture’ (Squires 2004, 37). In accordance with that advice, this research sought to generate a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data and inform its questions using the context of the operation of the NWAs to date. Thorough research was conducted on the history of the NWAs, and planning was undertaken with the annual awards calendar to ensure effective data capture could take place. During the planning stage, there was careful consideration of how the survey could provide maximum clarity for participants, and transparency regarding why the data was being collected, what it would be used for, and the method by which authors could provide the requested data. In designing the survey, a central priority was that respondents found the experience straightforward, that all respondents could be asked the same questions in the same way, and that the information collected would be representative of the full range of authors who have won a Northern Writing Award to date.

Survey questions were highly structured to ensure consistency. A structured questionnaire format was mobilised to collect both factual and attitudinal data and to explore the reasons behind participants’ answers. Some respondents might think the same thing, but for very different reasons, so being able to compare the different rationales of authors was significant to informing decisions about how to improve the NWAs in future. The decision to employ an online survey as the primary method of data capture was a carefully considered choice. The advantages of an online survey, rather than a paper-based postal survey, centred on the clearly defined sample and established list of e-mail addresses, creating an enhanced likelihood that authors would respond. Online surveys are also relatively cheap to undertake, quick to administer, and generate high quality data, all advantageous features to the time period available to conduct the impact study.

One potential limitation of using an online survey format was a lack of certainty regarding whether respondents would fully understand the questions. In order to address this, a pilot test was conducted before fielding the survey to the entire cohort sample. This pilot test was based on an established New Writing North author questionnaire that had been used in 2015 and 2016 to communicate with authors. The pilot survey was modelled on this successful and proven intervention and was subject to an internal pilot study at New Writing North during January 2018. Pilot sample users were asked to complete the survey and to talk through their application out loud so the designers could ascertain how they completed the questions, identify any points of confusion or tension, and make improvements based on the results. This pilot was key to determining the correctness of the instructions and whether respondents were able to follow the directions as indicated. It also enabled the editing back of questions that appeared too lengthy or wordy to pilot participants, the refining of option choices and ranges, and consideration of how to encourage the best response to open ended questions. The pilot survey ultimately helped reduce the chance of unreliable results, or of receiving no returns at all. The questions from the pilot survey were adapted as a result of the feedback received and user comments were incorporated to inform the final structure and wording of the NWA evaluation survey.

The online survey system *Submittable*—a cloud-based digital content management platform—was chosen as a familiar tool that past winners had already experienced using as part of their award application process. Monitoring during the data collection period was completed as part of an ongoing programme of data collection by the NWA programme, while additional data on equal opportunities monitoring was provided through access to the NWA archives. This combination of quantitative and qualitative information enabled the desired mixed methodology approach and the triangulation of the various data sets to achieve an overview of outcomes. The importance of confidentially was also outlined in the introduction to the email accompanying the survey. Offering confidentiality was key to encouraging an openness and fullness in author responses. The survey was made live on 1 February 2018 and emailed to all 168 past winners of the NWAs. Participants were given a month to complete the survey with a closing date of 28 February 2018. 92 out of 168 past winners took part in the impact evaluation survey, a return rate of 55%.

Once the survey period was complete, the data from the seven quantitative survey questions was synthesised and collated into spreadsheets to track emergent sub-themes and issues. The data generated by the ten qualitative survey questions produced substantial reflective responses amounting to around 5000 words. This valuable data highlighted insights and issues not captured by the closed quantitative questions. Initially, each response to the qualitative survey questions was read carefully at least twice. As the responses were read, common themes emerged and coding categories were established as a means of sorting the descriptive data, so that the materials bearing on a particular topic could be physically separated from other data. The most common code to emerge was that of perspectives held by subjects: the shared rules and norms across all responses, as well as the general point of view of each question area. These subject perspectives were then sub-coded by identifying the main issues raised by respondents. Once the data had been categorized and coded, it was possible to explain what was being said by survey participants about each subject or theme, to identify what categories were related, where trends and patterns could be noted, and if there were any common themes. When all the responses had been analysed, and the major patterns and trends identified, an evaluation analysis was produced addressing the three central aims of the NWAs: developing creative knowledge exchange, retaining the economic impact of regional creative talent, and enhancing diversity.

**Developing Creative Knowledge Exchange**

A central aim of the NWAs is to help regional writers from the North access the national networks of UK publishing. The research data shows that 69% of NWA winners claim that the award developed their networks within the writing community. 44% of NWA winners specifically claim that their award furthered their practical writing skills (including how to pitch their work, how to edit their work, how to write a synopsis, how to submit work, and how to write a funding bid). 20% of NWA winners claim that the awards directly led to the completion of a manuscript or starting a new manuscript after the winning entry. Through a series of significant knowledge exchange opportunities at discrete stages of the awards process, applicants benefit from a range of free enrichment events and activities. The annual NWA Roadshows are a series of free events that take place across the North and are designed to target both new, and emerging, as well as more experienced writers who are considering making an application to the NWA competition. The roadshow events are hosted by award winners, and feature presentations on the various prizes offered by the awards scheme, as well as some reflections on the contemporary writing landscape. These events offer a good model of practice in their promotion of networking among authors, as well as educating and engaging in knowledge exchange about the awards process and the professional writing industry at large.

Attendance at the awards party is compulsory for invited award winners who are nearing publication, and many used their impact survey return to outline how appreciated and how beneficial the experience had been for them both personally and professionally. Holding the annual awards in Newcastle offers a vital statement on the necessary de-centralisation of the UK literary awards and publishing industries, inviting key influencers to travel to the region and engage with its authors and literary culture. Prior to attending the awards party event, award winners are asked to attend a pitching workshop where they are coached on how to present their work in a professional context and strategies for overcoming any fears about how to network successfully. The workshop takes them through practical exercises with regard to their work and teaches authors how to articulate their writings to others. As part of this workshop, winners get chance to pitch their work to industry experts and receive feedback and support. 58% of NWA winners claim that this experience and winning their NWA increased their confidence and validity to call themselves a writer.

The range of creative industry skillsets developed as a result of winning a NWA cited by survey respondents include project management, preparing manuscripts for submission, collaboration with other writers and creatives, public speaking, media skills and digital literacies. Networking and pitching skills emerged as a particular area of strength that writers directly attribute to winning a NWA. Networking was the most commonly identified professional benefit experienced by awards alumni. Securing a publishing contract came a close second, with teaching, further education and training, marketing and media work following in order of ranked experience. One author claims that

the award taught me valuable skills in the area of presenting and selling my work, and I have seen more positive responses to my unsolicited queries as a result of this. Since winning I have been more confident—and much more skilful—in discussing my work with potential readers and/or publishers, which is a hugely important improvement for someone who is naturally shy and slightly awkward about putting myself forward in conversation with strangers.

Social media training and support was cited by many respondents are an area in which they appreciated additional training and support. Some writers used the survey to articulate a self-awareness of their ‘poor media skills’ and reluctance to engage in ‘self-promotion’, even though they also recognized that these are both central factors in promoting their work. Survey respondents identify training in ‘blog writing’, ‘how to promote our work on the internet’, and ‘marketing and getting reviews’ as key creative industry skillsets that the NWA prize, mentoring and associated networks had helped them to develop.

**Retaining the Economic Impact of Regional Creative Talent**

Historically, writers have been forced to relocate to London and leave the North in order to achieve recognition or success in the UK literary industry. The NWAs address this problem by aiming to improve the economy of the North through retaining and developing creative talent within the region, thereby building an ecology of regional writing that benefits that same region economically. A quarter of all past NWA winners (26%) claimed that their annual income has increased as a result of their award. A further 5% said that whilst their annual income had not increased overall, a larger percentage of it now comes from writing work. 33% of narrative fiction/non-fiction writers claimed that winning an NWA led to them securing an agent, while 29% of narrative fiction/non-fiction writers claimed that winning an NWA directly led to publication of their book. A further 21% said that winning an NWA led 'at least in part' to their publication. Overall, 65% of winning poetry and short fiction writers claimed that their NWA led to the publication of their work, Over a half (56%) of narrative fiction/non-fiction writers who won a cash bursary claimed that winning an NWA directly led to a publishing contract, and one third (33%) of narrative fiction/non-fiction writers who won a cash bursary claimed that winning an NWA directly led to them securing an agent.

The research also reveals that the NWAs have a diverse range of impacts on the professional development of creative talent in the region. 9% of NWA winners claimed that their award directly led to further writing awards or competition wins. These awards include national prizes such as the Crime Writers’ Association Dagger Award and the Society of Authors Award, and international accolades such as the US Pushcart Prize and the Hawthornden Prize. A further 13% of previous winners have been long or shortlisted for other literary awards including the Bath Novel Award, Route Publishing Next Great Novelist Award, and the Bridport prize. A further 5% claimed that their NWA led to other jobs directly related to writing. One quarter (25%) claim that the award led to paid writing work (not including teaching or publishing). 4% of this work relates to judging writing competitions and speaking on panels about writing. 19% of NWA winners state that their award led to further writing residencies and fellowships, or further funding and grants. 12% percent have gone on to work with NWN by contributing to writing development initiatives including mentoring subsequent NWA winners, hosting NWAs Roadshows and working as an ambassador for the NWAs.

9% of NWA winners have changed career as a direct result of winning the award. For these winners, the award enabled them to develop their talents in different sectors of the Northern creative economy. For one such author, “the award gave me the confidence to then apply to do a PhD’, while others found they that ‘gained opportunities such as lecturing on a volunteer basis on first and third year creative writing undergraduate courses (invaluable experience!)’ or were ‘asked to run a session at a major writing festival (paid!)’. Winning fellowships, entering other literary competitions, making festival appearances, mentoring other writers, becoming writers in residences across the world, paid writing commissioned blogs and journalism and getting new jobs in higher education were all reported as direct impacts on writers’ continuing professional development. As one writer states, ‘I put all these developments all down to winning my NWA’.

**Enhancing Diversity**

The survey results suggest that the NWAs leverage a relatively modest financial outlay to make a substantial investment in an evolving ecology of writing that effectively promotes the Northern regions as sustainable locations to live and work as a writer in the twenty-first century. Creating, rewarding, profiling and sustaining the regional production of culture, the NWAs underpins the literary culture of the North, and offers an important annual remind to the nation that there is a vast amount of writing talent in the region. The research also suggests that the NWAs offer a model of best practice in their ‘decentralisation’ of the UK literary industry (Wood 2017). Providing an annual showcase of new writing produced beyond the confines of the M25, the NWAs vitally decentralize a UK literary industry that consistently struggles to represent regional voices. Showcasing the work of Northern authors on a global platform, the NWAs plays an important role in establishing the North of England as a hub for literary production, as well as increasing the resilience of the regional literary market in England. Addressing regional inequalities in UK publishing, the NWAs draws focus away from the capital to offer a new spotlight on writers in the North and a model of good practice for publishing houses that struggle to represent UK regional diversity.

Responses to the impact evaluation research evidence how and why the NWAs facilitate an ecology of regional writing and thereby contribute to national-level change in wider cultural ways. This new data outlines how and why the NWAs can respond flexibly and responsively to variations in the funding landscape, to new literary forms, and to growth in the demands and opportunities of the writing industry. It also shows how regional work-in-progress awards like the NWAs can redress barriers to engagement and disparities of representation in UK publishing for minority authors through specific named awards as well as bespoke engagement opportunities against a backdrop of growing industry awareness of under-represented writing groups. Elsewhere, the data suggests national benefits from a regional award in the form of the NWA’s value and recognition for Northern writers and how it fosters these benefits by connecting regional writers to national network of fellow authors and industry professionals. Economically, the research shows that the NWAs have a positive financial impact of the income and professional development of Northern authors and enable access to new careers and employment opportunities within the region. Facilitating a national profile for Northern writings through a Newcastle-based awards ceremony and UK networking events, the NWAs retain talent in the Northern regions by enhancing the career development and longer-term skills and employability of winners, and thereby also create an effective ‘talent pipeline’ from the North to the UK writing industry.

The UK literary industry suffers from a problem relating to the persistent and recognised under-representation of Northern writers and voices across fiction, poetry, film and television. Major policy bodies from UK Parliament to Arts Council England, and national publishing organisation including Penguin Random House and the Northern Fiction Alliance have asked for help in identifying successful models of intervention to address this recognised issue. This results of this research present the NWAs as a potential solution: a model of intervention with a relatively small financial outlay, a high SROI (Social Return on Investment), and a quantifiable impact on both the region and the nation. This article recommends that further research is undertaken into the NWAs and the methods by which they profile new talent for the UK literary industry. Further, it recommends that targeted Arts Council England support to explore the NWAs as one model by which to address the de-centralising UK publishing and to represent and enable new writings from Northern regions. To enable this, it also calls for formal monitoring measures to ensure the effective ongoing collection and management of all NWAs related data through the establishment of an annual winners’ survey and a NWA archive.

This research offers initial steps in part of a wider project of understanding the impact of literary awards as interventions in addressing the persistent under-representation of Northern writers in the UK literary industry. It suggests that the impact of the NWAs extends beyond the immediate prize winners and across the Northern region to national levels, and offer vital new models of intervention and social value for the contemporary British creative industries. On a regional level, the NWAs contribute to the regeneration of the North of England, building a sustainable community of professional practice in a post-industrial area that continues to be adversely effected by social and economic decline. On a national level, the NWAs also contribute to the economic and social profile of the region, preventing a North-South brain drain by encouraging writers to stay in the region, rather than relocating to the South of England find the opportunities and training necessary to support their professional development. In this context, the NWAs play a significant role in promoting the power of culture as an active component of the regeneration of a region, and function as an important example of how regional interventions can develop skills, harness innovation, and invest in culture, and so create a significant role for the creative industries in the future of the Northern Powerhouse.

**Works Cited**

Arts Council England (2018) ‘Case Studies: How the North became a powerhouse of independent publishing’, *Arts Council England* <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/case-studies/how-north-became-powerhouse-independent-publishing>

Arts Council England (2017) ‘Literature in the 21st Century: Understanding Models of Support for Literary Fiction’, *Arts Council England* <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Literature%20in%20the%2021st%20Century%20report.pdf>

Arts Council England (2014) ‘Advice and Guidance: Map Area Boundaries’, *Arts Council England* <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Map\_area\_boundaries.pdf>

English, James (2002) ‘Winning the Culture Game: Prizes, Awards, and the Rules of Art’, *New Literary History*, 33:1, pp. 109-135.

English, James (2005) *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (London: Harvard University Press)

HM Government, ‘The Northern Powerhouse Is Ready and Open for Business’, *Northern Powerhouse* <https://northernpowerhouse.gov.uk/>

ICM Unlimited (2018) ‘Impact of Brexit on the arts and culture sector’, *Arts Council England* <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Arts%20Council\_Brexit%20Research%202017\_Report\_FINAL.pdf>

Indyk, Ivor (2016) ‘Literary Prizes: The Cult of the Middlebrow’, *Sydney Review of Books*, 3 May <http://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/4-september-2015-literary-prizes>

Merritt, Stephanie (2003) ‘A Question of Merit’, *The Observer*, 12 January <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jan/12/features.review3>

NFA (2018) ‘NFA: eight steps to “redefine literary landscape”’, *The Bookseller*, 12 April <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/nfa-eight-steps-redefine-literary-landscape-766581>

Squires, Claire (2004) “A Common Ground? Book Prize Culture in Europe”, *Javnost: The Public*, 11:4, pp.37-47.

Welton, Tom (2016) ‘Publishing risks “becoming irrelevant”, warns Penguin Random House boss’, *The Guardian*, 10 October <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/10/publishing-risks-becoming-irrelevant-warns-penguin-random-house-boss?

Wood, Eloise (2017) ‘And Other Stories launches £5k Northern Book Prize’, *The Bookseller*, 21 September <<https://www.thebookseller.com/news/and-other-stories-launches-5k-northern-book-prize-celebrate-sheffield-move-642416>>