

# Press release: UK starts selection process for next Poet Laureate

- Advisory panel appointed to advise on recommendation to Her Majesty The Queen
- Next poet laureate will take over from Dame Carol Ann Duffy in May 2019
- Government also announces National Poetry Competition, to increase access to poetry for young people

The process of selecting the UK's next Poet Laureate has begun with the appointment of a new advisory panel, Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, announced today.

The panel, made up of experts from across the regions and nations of the UK, includes the founder of the Bradford Literature Festival and the organiser of a showcase event with the Jamaican Poet Laureate.

It will offer its suggestions on the scope and purpose of the next Poet Laureate, with a recommendation put to Her Majesty The Queen.

The next Poet Laureate will take over from Dame Carol Ann Duffy, who was appointed in 2009, and was the first woman and first Scot to take up the post.

Representatives from the British Council, Arts Council England and Arts Council Northern Ireland, Royal Society of Literature, Scottish Poetry Library, Literature Wales, The Poetry Society, Forward Arts Foundation, British Library and Poetry Book Society are also included in the panel.

The news comes as the Government announces the relaunch of the National Poetry Competition in schools from September next year. The competition will give young people a chance to discover more about the UK's rich literary heritage and experience the joy that comes from learning a poem.

Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Poetry has the power to connect us to people, places and ideas. It also cuts across social and cultural divides. The important role of Poet Laureate helps to record key moments in British history and celebrates our rich literary tradition.

I pay tribute to Dame Carol Ann Duffy for her dedicated service in championing poetry to the nation. I look forward to working with a new advisory panel, that reflects the whole of the UK and the new ways we consume poetry, in electing her successor.

Nick Gibb, Minister for School Standards, said:

We hope that relaunching the National Poetry Competition will inspire children to read and write poetry and learn from the way the best poets use language.

Our focus on phonics in primary schools is helping more young children open up the joys of the written and spoken word, with 163,000 more six-year-olds on track to be fluent readers than in 2012. This means the world of poetry has never been more accessible to young people.

Since the role of Poet Laureate was established in 1668, incumbents have included William Wordsworth, Ted Hughes and Sir John Betjeman.

When she completes her ten-year term in April 2019, Dame Duffy – well-known for her range of monologues, love poems, children’s rhymes and plays – will have written poems to mark the deaths of Henry Allingham and Harry Patch (the last two British soldiers to fight in the First World War), the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, and even David Beckham’s injured Achilles in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup.

She has also just published ‘The Wound In Time’, a poem which seeks to remember those who died during the First World War, ahead of commemorations that will mark the centenary of Armistice Day next weekend.

Dame Duffy has spent much of her tenure boosting the national conversation about poetry, carrying out a range of visits to schools and festivals, and launching the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, which seeks to recognise excellence in poetry, highlighting outstanding contributions made by poets to our cultural life.

Following the closure of nominations in December 2018, the advisory panel will agree a shortlist of candidates for consideration by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, before a final recommendation is put forward by the Prime Minister to Her Majesty The Queen in the Spring. A formal announcement is expected to be made in May 2019. The role will be for a ten year period.

ENDS

### **Notes to Editor:**

The news follows National Poetry Day research recently published by [the National Literacy Trust](#), which highlighted how poetry continues to transcend social backgrounds and the changing way children engage with it, finding that:

- Children who receive free school meals are more likely to say that they read, listen to or watch poetry in their spare time (34%) than those who don’t (23%)
- Almost half (46%) of all children and young people said they consume or create poetry in their spare time

Of this group:

- 47% read, listen to or watch poetry in their spare time at least once a week
- 32% of “young poetry consumers” now read poetry online or on a phone, and 31% now watch it as a video
- 68% said they read poetry because it makes them feel creative
- 66% said they write poetry because it is a great way to express themselves and their feelings
- 52% write or perform poetry in their spare time because it is different to other forms of writing they do in school

Those surveyed made a range of suggestions on how to make poetry more appealing, such as “including more narrative, making it more like a story”, “make it more relevant and modern”, and “find more poems about sports or video games”.

Membership of the Poet Laureate Steering Group:

- Alex Higgs, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Chair)
- Sarah Crown, Director of Literature, Arts Council England
- Cortina Butler, Director of Literature, British Council
- Molly Rosenberg, Director, Royal Society of Literature
- Judith Palmer, Director, The Poetry Society
- Sophie O’Neill, Managing Director, Poetry Book Society
- Nicola Solomon, CEO, Society of Authors
- Susannah Herbert, Executive Director, Forward Arts Foundation
- Chloe Garner, Artistic Director, Ledbury Poetry Festival
- Jamie Andrews, Head of Culture and Learning, British Library
- Lleucu Siencyn, Chief Executive, Literature Wales
- Syima Aslam, Director, Bradford Literature Festival
- Chris Gribble, Chief Executive, National Centre for Writing
- Asif Khan, Director, Scottish Poetry Library
- Damian Smyth, Head of Drama and Literature, Arts Council Northern Ireland

The Laureateship was a lifetime appointment until 1999. Following the death of Ted Hughes, it was decided that the appointment should be for a fixed term of ten years, to give more poets the opportunity to serve.

The appointment is made by Her Majesty The Queen, acting on the advice of Her Majesty’s Government.

The position is honorary and it is up to the individual poet to decide whether or not to produce poetry for national occasions or Royal events.

The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry was devised by Carol Ann Duffy, and is supported by The Poetry Society to recognise outstanding contributions made by poets to our cultural life. The £5,000 annual prize money is awarded by Carol Ann Duffy, funded with the honorarium the Poet Laureate traditionally receives from Her Majesty The Queen.

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## Speech: PM's press statement at the Norwegian Parliament

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Thank you very much Prime Minister and it is a great pleasure to be here in Norway – this is my first visit to Norway as Prime Minister.

I'm delighted to have been able to attend the Northern Future Forum – thank you for hosting it and thank you for focusing our thinking on the important subject of how innovation and technology can improve healthcare, and how we can, the Nordic and Baltic countries and the UK can cooperate more in this area to the benefit of all our citizens.

As you say, the UK and Norway have a strong and long-standing bilateral relationship. A very strong relationship across a great many issues, and I look forward to building on that in the future.

I look forward to talking to you about how we can enhance our future trade relationship, and how we can work together on issues like security and defence, and on the many other issues you have listed where we share our thinking and have worked together in the past.

And we want to build on that cooperation when we leave the European Union.

Thank you for the comments you have just made and the commitment you have made to UK citizens here in Norway and I make the same commitment to Norwegian citizens living in the UK.

We hope of course to be able to come to a satisfactory conclusion of the current negotiations in relation to this matter.

In the event of no deal, we would look to be able to have an agreement for EEA and EFTA countries, but whatever happens, we confirm that people from with EEA EFTA countries, Norwegian citizens and those others who are living in the UK who have made their life choice to be in the UK will be able to stay in the UK. We want them to stay, they are part of our community, they are part of our country and we welcome the contribution that they make.

I look forward to the talks we are going to have today, and also look forward to the opportunity to address what I believe is the 70th session of the Nordic Council.

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# Press release: Joint Statement by the UK, France and Germany on the Iran Nuclear Deal

We deeply regret the further re-imposition of sanctions by the US, due to the latter's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The JCPOA is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and of multilateral diplomacy, endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council through Resolution 2231. It is crucial for the security of Europe, the region, and the entire world.

The JCPOA is working and delivering on its goal. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed in twelve consecutive reports that Iran is abiding by its commitments under the Agreement.

We expect Iran to continue implementing all its nuclear commitments in full, as set out by the JCPOA. The JCPOA also provides for the lifting of international sanctions in order to have a positive impact on trade and economic relations with Iran, but most importantly on the lives of the Iranian people.

It is our aim to protect European economic operators engaged in legitimate business with Iran, in accordance with EU law and with UN Security Council resolution 2231.

As parties to the JCPOA, we have committed to work on, inter alia, the preservation and maintenance of effective financial channels with Iran, and the continuation of Iran's export of oil and gas. On these, as on other topics, our work continues, including with Russia and China as participants to the JCPOA and with third countries interested in supporting the JCPOA. These efforts have been intensified in recent weeks, particularly those underpinning the European initiative to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle on which are proceeding with work to set up. This will enable continued sanctions lifting to reach Iran and allow for European exporters and importers to pursue legitimate trade.

Further work must be done to assist and reassure economic operators pursuing legitimate business under EU law. Our Finance Ministers will further pursue this at their next meeting. Our collective resolve to complete this work is unwavering.

We remain committed to implementing the JCPOA as a matter of respecting international agreements and of our shared international security, and expect Iran to play a constructive role in this regard.

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## Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@Jeremy\\_Hunt](#) and [Facebook](#)
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# [Speech: Supporting Libyan Authorities in Efforts to Build the Rule of Law](#)

Mr President,

I would like to start by congratulating you on China's assumption of the presidency of the Council for November. We wish you all the best for the month ahead.

Mr President,

I would like to thank the Prosecutor for briefing the Council on her sixteenth report on the situation in Libya to the Security Council. The UK remains fully supportive of the ICC's work on Libya to tackle impunity and ensure those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern in Libya are held accountable.

Mr President,

The Prosecutor's latest report highlights once again the troubling situation in Libya. The United Kingdom has been clear that the status quo is not a sustainable option. The continued political divisions in Libya benefit no-one except certain armed groups, bent on criminality, who have created an environment of lawlessness, intimidation and fear in which ordinary Libyans continue to suffer. The increase in violence in and around Tripoli since August, and the ongoing sporadic violence which has continued since the cease-fire on 4 September, highlights this. These innocent civilians, including many children, deserve better. There is an urgent need to break the political deadlock and bring peace to Libya. To this end, it is vital for all parties to engage in good faith with the UN-led political process and Special Representative to the Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé.

We must ensure that all those committing human rights violations and abuses in Libya, including unlawful killings, do not evade justice. The United Kingdom has strongly supported resolutions at the Human Rights Council on increasing accountability, and calling for those committing acts in Libya amounting to war crimes or other breaches of international humanitarian law to be investigated and held to account. We call on all parties to cooperate with the ICC including through the execution of arrest warrants. The United Kingdom is grateful for the Prosecutor's update on the cases against Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al Werfalli and Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled and notes that the Prosecutor's Office believes that al Werfalli is no longer in LNA detention, and is currently at large in Libya.

The United Kingdom will continue to work closely with other Member States, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Libyan Prosecutor General's Office in the investigation of the appalling reports of crimes against migrants, including those perpetrated by militia and armed groups in Libya, and those involving international migrants transiting through Libya. These crimes allegedly include torture, killings, sexual violence and even enslavement of migrants. We are deeply concerned that the number of migrants in detention centres has continued to rise and the United Kingdom will continue to provide assistance to those who find themselves in such centres. In response to the heightened risk of trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence in Libya, we have also provided specific support to assist in the protection for women and girls. We acknowledge the importance of the Office of the Prosecutor integrating a gender perspective into its work, based on its Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom is a strong principled supporter of the ICC. We will continue to provide our full support to the Prosecutor and her team. It is crucial that Member States and relevant international organisations work to assist the Libyan authorities in their efforts to build the rule of law in Libya. We, along with our international partners, will continue to work with Libya to provide it with the support it needs to meet the challenges it faces.



Thank you Mr President.