

Aberystwyth University

Fair Pay for Writers' research report

Bennett-Gillison, Sophie; Fuller-Love, Nerys; Jones, Julie

DOI:

[10.20391/f3p9-qv97](https://doi.org/10.20391/f3p9-qv97)

Publication date:

2024

Citation for published version (APA):

Bennett-Gillison, S., Fuller-Love, N., & Jones, J. (2024). Fair Pay for Writers' research report. Prifysgol Aberystwyth | Aberystwyth University. <https://doi.org/10.20391/f3p9-qv97>

Document License

CC BY

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Aberystwyth Research Portal (the Institutional Repository) are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Aberystwyth Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Aberystwyth Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

tel: +44 1970 62 2400
email: is@aber.ac.uk

Fair Pay for Writers' research report

Completed by:
Dr Sophie Bennett-Gillison, Nerys Fuller-Love and Dr Julie Jones
Aberystwyth Business School

In consultation with Literature Wales

June 2023

Research Aim

The aim of this research is to create guidelines for calculating a fair rate of pay for authors' working in Wales that is sensitive to a range of considerations both from the perspective of authors' and commissioning organisations'.



Introduction

This research was produced in collaboration with Literature Wales, which is the national company for the development of literature. It facilitates, funds, and directly delivers a literary programme across Wales. Literature Wales' work includes inspiring communities through participation in literature, developing the skills and talents of writers, and celebrating Wales' literary culture.

This includes frequently commissioning writers to deliver events, workshops, or literary work. Literature Wales' current rates of pay currently varies based on the experience of the writer and whether special preparation is involved beforehand, but generally falls within the below ranges:

- An author reading, followed by Q&A (1 hour): £100 – £200
- A talk, lecture or reading (1 – 1.5 hours): £150 – £200
- A writer in school for a day: between £300 – £400 for a whole day / between £175 – £200 for half a day)

Literature Wales also funds literary events through our [Inspiring Communities Fund](#), where it suggests the above rates as guidelines but does not mandate a minimum fee. However, many organisations still pay significantly less to writers than is suggested in these guidelines.

There is a lack of research on what constitutes a fair and reasonable rate of pay for authors working in Wales and taking part in literary events within this location. The Society of Authors (SPA), the UK trade union for all types of writers, illustrators, and literary translators, offers [guidance but no specific rates](#). The SPA does [publish its own rates](#), although they specify that these should not be taken as guidance for other organisations. Additionally, as a London based organisation there are significant geographical differences that should be considered when calculating the rate of pay for Wales-based authors. This includes Wales' unique financial, cultural, and bilingual context - factors which would not be reflect in the SPA's rates. The Arts Council of Wales also do not offer specific rates for calculating author pay. Instead they [require funded organisations to pay industry minimum rates of pay](#), linking to relevant Trade Unions for

other disciplines but not for writing. Instead, the Arts Council simply ask that organisations pay the [National Living Wage](#) as an absolute minimum.

In order to begin to address this issue, this report provides an overview of research conducted with 103 writers across Wales identifying the main issues around calculating fair pay for authors working in Wales. The research methodology is presented below, then a profile of writers' is provided initially, this is followed by an overview of commissioning organisations interviewed in this research and their views of writers' pay. The main body of the report identifies the main issues around calculating fair pay for authors working in Wales. This report concludes with a set of guidelines / recommendations which can be used by organisations, such as Literature Wales, when considering future commissions.

Methodology

A mixed methods explanatory Design (Cresswell, 2014) was implemented. Survey data was collected from English and Welsh-Language Writers located in Wales. Writers who are active in Wales and earn an income from their literary work were selected to take part. The criteria for inclusion were:

1. Writers who have been commissioned (paid or otherwise) to deliver a literary event in the past 5 years.
2. Writers who were born in Wales, Living in Wales or commissioned to produce literary work in Wales.

The survey was shared as an open call out through Literature Wales' website and social media, but writers were also directly approached from Literature Wales' networks, including their database and newsletter. Other partners in the literary sector were also asked to help share the survey, including but not limited to the Books Council of Wales, The Society of Authors, and individual publishers in Wales.

Of those completing the survey, 24 respondents were then asked to take part in interviews. Writers were selected for the interviews using stratified random sampling to

ensure a range of annual literary income, ethnicity, and location were included among writers interviewed.

Survey	Welsh-language Participants	30	103 Total
	English-Language Participants	73	
Interviews	Welsh-language Participants	7	24 Total
	English-Language Participants	17	

Eight commissioning organisations were also asked to take part. Four of these interviews were conducted in Welsh, and four in English.

Survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics to produce a participant profile, interview data was analysed using the six-step approach to Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). Data was grouped into the following thematic questions:

- How are fees for literary events and commissions (of specific work) currently calculated?
- How do these fees vary based on different factors (location, type of event/commission, language, anything else identified from the survey or interviews)?
- How important is pay for literary events and commissions as part of a writer's wider portfolio of income (book sales, other full-time or part-time work)?
- How are fees for literary events and commissions currently falling short (what are the factors writers don't feel are being considered but should be)?
- What are the costs and benefits of undertaking literary events and commissions aside from pay, and how important are these to writers?
- Do expenses (such as travel costs) cover the costs of delivering literary events / commissions?
- What are the barriers for commissioning organisations to offer fair pay for writers to deliver literary events/commissions?

- What are the barriers for writers to demand pay that they feel reflects the work of delivering literary events / commissions?
- Should the effects of Covid-19 and the current cost-of-living crisis affect how organisations calculate rates of pay (and if so, how)?
- What are the perceived negative effects of paying writers too little for delivering literary events or commissions?
- What are the perceived negative effects of paying writers too much for delivering literary events or commissions?

These themes form the basis of the analysis presented below.

Who writes?

English Language Writers'

Demographics from the survey completed by 73 English-language writers in Wales indicates that the typical female writer is likely to engage in poetry and fiction or prose, while the typical male writer is more likely to engage in non-fiction, poetry and fiction or prose. (Appendix A, Figure 13). Interviews identified many writers as combining children's fiction with adult novels or poetry to increase income opportunities both in terms of publishing more material and being asked to undertake more workshops (in schools, for example). Popular publishing outlets for English-language writers include a traditional publisher and online or printed magazines and journals. English-language writers are more likely to be over 35 years of age, the most popular age groups being 35-44 years and 55 years and over. Just under one quarter were above retirement age (Appendix A, Figure 1).

Whilst there was an almost equal number of writers' born in Wales and elsewhere, 92% of English-language respondents currently live in Wales (Appendix A, Figure 2), showing that a significant proportion of respondents in this research have moved to Wales. Despite this, only 44% of English-language writers' are regularly commissioned to deliver literary events in Wales (Appendix A, Figure 2), the interviews identified barriers to

participating in these events including the cost of travelling (where this was not paid, or not paid in full by the venue itself) and time taken to prepare, travel to and participate in the event, (where preparation and travel costs were not paid, or not paid in full by the venue itself). Some English-language respondents chose not to deliver literary events in Wales if better paid opportunities were offered in England. Finally, some English-language respondents felt that invitations to deliver literary events in Wales were often reserved for established writers' (described as those who had won awards for their work) or those whose work had greater cultural significance.

English-language writers in this research earn below the national average UK salary for the work that they do. The average part-time salary in the UK is £13,549 (ONS, 2021), yet 79% of part-time English-language writers in our study earned below £10,000 per annum for their writing (Appendix A Figure 3). In addition, those earning below £20,000 per annum for their writing were involved in more types of writing than those who earned higher amounts for their work (Appendix A Figure 12). Many of these describe themselves as emerging writers' (Appendix A, Figure 4) with an occasional income from their writing work. A popular additional income for English-language writers' is freelance work. Our research indicates that many English-language writers' may be career changers, moving into the writing profession later in life, this is demonstrated from the survey results which show that a significant number of English-language writers' have received an income from their work for less than 10 years (Appendix A, Figure 5), but have been writing creatively for over 20 years (Appendix A, Figure 6). This was supported by interview data where English-language writers often described a gradual move into writing from a previous profession, motivated by a desire to achieve a better quality of life or satisfaction from work.

Welsh-Language Writers'

Demographics from the survey completed by 30 Welsh-language writers' working in Wales indicates that the typical writer is likely to engage in poetry and / fiction prose. Welsh-language writers are more likely to be over 35 years of age, the most popular age

groups being 35-44 years and 55 years and over. In contrast to the English-language writers', only 6% of those surveys were retirement age or above (Appendix B, Figure 1). Also, in contrast to the English-language writers', 90% of Welsh-language writers were born in Wales, yet only 60% of these currently live in Wales (Appendix B, Figure 2), indicating some Welsh-language respondents have migrated to other parts of the UK, but still publish in their language of their home country. Despite this, less than half English and Welsh-language writers are regularly commissioned to deliver literary events in Wales (Appendix A, Figure 2 & Appendix B, Figure 2). The interviews identified barriers to participating in these events including the low pay received, cost of travelling (where this was not paid, or not paid in full by the venue itself) and lack of realistic remuneration for preparation time:

'I went to a school and did 3 sessions and got £50 for the day. And that includes the preparation time. But I know for some events you'll get £30'.

Increased travel costs were identified as having a significant impact on both Welsh-Language and English-Language writers', as some of them felt they could not pass these costs on to the organisers.

'Because I do things voluntarily, I can't increase the rates. I do feel there's a problem of needing petrol money now things are going back face to face'.

Less than 2% of Welsh-language writers earn an income solely from their writing with 83% of respondents earning an additional income from a full-time job (Appendix B, Figure 10). All writers in this research earn below the national average UK salary for the work that they do. The average part-time salary in the UK is £13,549 (ONS, 2021), yet 70% of part-time Welsh-language writers in our study earned below £10,000 per annum for their writing (Appendix B Figure 3). In contrast to the English-language writers', the majority of Welsh-language writers describe themselves as established writers with another source of income (Appendix B, Figure 4). A popular additional income for both Welsh-language and English-language writers' is freelance work. Our research indicates that many Welsh-language writers' have been earning an income from their work for many years, this is demonstrated from the survey results which show that a significant number have

received an income from their work for over 20 years (Appendix B, Figure 6), and have been writing creatively for over 20 years (Appendix A, Figure 7). This was supported by interview data where Welsh-Language writers often described being unable to earn a full-time income from their work and therefore pursuing their creative career alongside paid employment for many years:

‘You can’t make a living as a writer working in Welsh. For 10 years I was freelance, but once I became a mother, I took a part-time job at a publisher as a creative editor, so I work part-time and write the rest of the time’.

Commissioning Organisations

Commissioning organisations asked to take part in this research vary in location, size and scope in order to provide a holistic representation of commissioning organisation across Wales.

Location: One of the organisations worked across the UK, and a further two worked across all of Wales. The remaining organisations were spread across North, West, and mid Wales.

Size: Organisations vary in size from small scale community literary events to internationally known and recognised organisations. All organisations interviewed held literary events, however these varied from regular ‘book club’ gatherings, annual festivals and community talks or presentations. Schools and bookshops were not included in these.

Scope: Organisations described their interaction with writers in one of the following ways: Commissioning writers to appear at events, give readings, contribute to debates. Inviting writers to present at international events outside Wales. Inviting writers to give workshops.

How are fees for literary events and commissions (of specific work) currently calculated?

Results from the survey indicate that the most popular literary events or activities are talks, interviews and creative writing workshops. Fees for literary events and commissions vary widely, for example fees for a talk vary from £25 per hour to £250 per hour (Appendix A, Figure 7 & Appendix B, Figure 7) while workshops command higher fees, ranging from £150 per day to £450 per day (Appendix A, Figure 8, Appendix B, Figure 8). These figures were similar for both Welsh Language and English Language writers. Other activities, such as book signing, appear to be considered by many as a voluntary or expenses only activities (Appendix A, Figure 9, Appendix B, Figure 9). Data from the interviews indicate that the variable rates are due to the wide range of activities writers engage in, from talks at well-known literary events to informal talks at local community groups:

'I did another night where I got £30. I had £100 from {a well-known commissioning organisation} for one night, and I did another event for free with learners.'

'When I've contributing to a volume for a publisher, I got £75 for the article. And when I write things for the radio, it's pretty paltry.'

In general fees are set by the commissioning organisations, and those who are grant funded or have a more formal operational structure are more likely to have a set fee for specific activities which will be paid to all writers' regardless of experience and status. There is greater flexibility seen in organisations who are community run, in these instances fees may vary from expenses only to a small sum, often of less than £100. Interviews indicate that both English-language and Welsh-language writers' can be broadly grouped into two types, those who are more business focused and those who are more community focused. The latter group are more likely to attempt to negotiate a change in fee if they feel this is less than adequate.

'I do schools workshops but I'm up-front about fees, even before I get there.... at the start I give them my fee, and if they agree we go ahead if not I try to explain why I need to charge that, if they don't get it I don't do it.'

These English-language and Welsh-language writers' often have an amount they expect to be paid for different activities and, if the fee they are offered is lower, they will negotiate. They are also more willing to turn down literary events or commissions if they are unhappy with the fee offered. English-language and Welsh-language writers' who are more community focused are more likely to accept a fee that is less than adequate, or participate in activities free of charge, if these activities are of benefit to the local community or literature in general.

'You know the pay will be terrible but that's your work, your specialism – you believe literature is important'.

They are less likely to initiate discussions around fees and more willing to undertake activities for expenses only; however, they are also less likely to travel outside of their locality to take part in activities.

How do these fees vary based on different factors (location, type of event or commission, language, anything else identified from the survey or interviews)?

English-language Writers'

For English-language writers in general fees do not vary much across Wales. However, interview data suggests that there is a variation in fees between Wales and England, with higher fees paid in England and, for events located in London, even higher again, as would be expected.

'I have a friend who's recently given up on work promoting with publishers in Wales and decided to focus only on English publishers because they pay more. She'll travel to Birmingham or even London because they pay so much more'.

There is also variation between types of events as community events or school activities tend to offer lower amounts than large or well-known literary festivals. This is illustrated in the survey data where a survey respondent was paid a fee of £540 from BBC for just under 30 minutes broadcasting (Appendix A, Figure 10).

Rather than locational differences, or differences in the type of event, the interview data identified the type of organisation as being the main determinant of variable fees. For example, organisations that are grant funded tend to have better levels of reporting and budgeting experience and therefore are more likely to offer set rates, and less likely to deviate from these regardless of location or event type. This was confirmed by interviews with commissioning organisations:

'We pay £250 for artists a day regardless of their experience'.

Welsh-Language Writers'

Welsh-language writers' felt that there is a difference between the pay rates for writers in Wales compared to those in England. One of the issues with working in the Welsh language, especially in an area where Welsh speakers are in the minority, is that there are very few opportunities to network and ask advice about pay rates.

'In the Welsh medium I think there are a lot of opportunities where you get a fair pay but sometimes it's hard because they expect you to give a price, and if you don't have the social capital or you don't know anyone to give you that advice'.

How important is pay for literary events and commissions as part of a writer's wider portfolio of income (book sales, other full-time or part-time work)?

English-language Writers'

Few English-language writers in this research relied solely on their creative work for income (Appendix A, Figure 11). However, for these writers' who we can describe as being more business focused, literary events such as talks and commissions in schools, festival and libraries made up a significant percentage of their overall income and they were pro-active in seeking out such opportunities.

Writing is my main source of income, and events associated with this, of course, like school workshops. School workshops are a big part of my income. I'm doing more of these now and that's reliable income.

For example, as explained by one English-language writer, schools workshops contributed significantly to their annual income, and in this instance the writer regularly contacted schools to offer their services. The majority of English-language writers', however, had an additional income or relied on income generated from their spouse. Many writers explained that book sales were not a viable source of income and so royalties were considered a 'little extra' rather than a regular income source.

'Events are a small percentage. I have other income as an editor. In terms of events and commissions these are a lot less than advances, but I don't get a lot of those either'.

English-language Writers described wanting to be paid for the work that they did but acknowledged that this profession would never produce a viable income. Instead, payment was seen as recognition for the work, proof of value.

'But in not getting a fee there's a lack of status. For me, in taking myself seriously I have to try to keep at boundaries for my pay – but I don't find that easy'.

In some circumstances writers had moved into the writing profession wishing to earn a living from this but had later accepted this would not be possible.

Welsh-language respondents

Few Welsh-language Writers in this research relied solely on their creative work for income (Appendix B, Figure4). In contrast to the English-language writers' those writing through the medium of Welsh agreed that although the pay was poor, they were still motivated to do it overall because they felt it was important. However, they also acknowledged that some people would not be able to continue if they were on a very low income.

'It doesn't mean it's a good thing you're not paid well, and it does mean some people are closed out because it's not enough'.

The level of pay and the writers' willingness to take part in events appears to depend on whether they have other income. Some of the interviewees were retired and felt that

contributing to community organisations was important and they often didn't claim expenses.

'I haven't done it for money - I feel like I'm giving something back after retiring. It's usually small and community organisations who don't have much money. And I wouldn't raise (my fees). If I go over projects, I could claim expenses, but I don't usually'.

How are fees for literary events and commissions currently falling short (what are the factors writers don't feel are being considered but should be)?

English-Language Writers'

There are three main issues identified through the interviews. The first being English-language and Welsh-language writers' reticence to negotiate unfair fees, indicating to the commissioning organisation that these rates are acceptable. The second being the lack of understanding by some commissioning organisations of the preparatory work, travel costs and travel time that is involved in events and/or commissions. The third issue is that, where commissioning organisations are aware of the cost and time commitments for such activities, they are presented with a conflicting situation of ensuring adequate pay for writers' whilst keeping ticket sales at a reasonable level. In these cases, organisations must either commission fewer writers', or offer lower fees. There is also the issue of ensuring that guidelines are followed. While many commissioning organisations in this research identified systems implemented for ensuring fair pay, some writers' felt that a more standardised approach needed to be implemented:

'Fair pay is also key, and I feel frustrated sometimes with the Arts Council of Wales who recommend a daily rate, but companies don't keep to this. And then who are they answerable to? There's a lack of consistency between commissioning organisations'.

This was supported in the interviews with commissioning organisations, where many agreed that they may increase a fee if the opportunity to host a well-known/established writer became available.

Welsh-language writers'

In addition to the factors identified by the English-Language writers' (detailed above) Welsh-language writers' felt that working in the Welsh language, especially in an area where Welsh speakers are in the minority provided very few opportunities to network and ask advice about pay rates. In addition, one interviewee felt that the shelf life for Welsh books was shorter than for the English ones because the shops were small.

'What happens in Welsh is books have a short life. While it's new it will be in the shops but then it disappears. If you think in English those books will stay in the shop for a few years. But in Wales the shops are small and there's only so many books they can keep, so the shelf-life is shorter'.

What are the costs and benefits of undertaking literary events and commissions aside from pay, and how important are these for writers?

Both English-language and Welsh-Language writers' in the interviews identified associated costs including travel, subsistence and preparation time involved. Some writers identified these in terms of time taken away from writing whilst others identified these as direct costs where organisations are unable to cover part or all of these.

In terms of time, different activities were viewed as taking more preparatory time than others; school workshops, for example, were identified as taking longer to prepare for but, in many cases, the writer described being paid for only for the workshop hours themselves:

'I went to a school and did 3 sessions and got £50 for the day. And that includes the preparation time'.

Some activities which were low paid, or where expenses were not provided, were still undertaken but viewed as marketing opportunities or contributions to the community:

'I've been invited to go to a reading club just to talk with them I don't have any idea what that will be like, but I agreed because I'm glad that they're reading my book'.

The more business focused writers were unlikely to take part in these unless they were within close radius, while the community focused writers were more likely to take part in these as part of a perceived contribution to society. This applied to both English-language and Welsh-Language writers”:

'I know the authors who succeed are the ones who promote. Some authors don't promote their work and that's not advantageous in the long-term. So I do some things for free if I think it's worth it for the promotion'

In short, the writers in this study accepted the need to undertake some activities which were not fully financially reimbursed, such as appearances at local events/libraries or occasional school workshops. The extent to which they were prepared to do this repeatedly depended upon their business or community focus.

Do expenses (such as travel costs) cover the costs of delivering literary events / commissions?

In most instances travel expenses do not cover the costs of delivering literary events / commissions. Larger or more well-known organisations that are better funded are more likely to cover the full cost of these, as are organisations based outside Wales. Where English-language and Welsh-Language writers' were offered amounts that did not fully cover costs those writers' who were more business focused were more confident or willing to negotiate rates, and therefore more likely to be better compensated than those who did not.

What are the barriers for commissioning organisations to offer fair pay for writers to deliver literary events/commissions?

Barriers to offering fair pay include the following: misunderstanding of costs incurred by English-language and Welsh-Language writers', misunderstanding regarding writers' motivation, lack of experience in HR matters and lack of funds to provide fair pay to all.

Misunderstanding of costs incurred by writers': The majority of organisations interviewed provide expenses for delivering events/commissions. However, these do not always include preparation time for the event or the cost of overnight accommodation if the event was a significant distance away. In addition, to this travel expenses may be provided at a set rate regardless of the distance travelled. Where organisations pay English-language and Welsh-Language writers' for preparation time, this may be a set amount and therefore does not consider that some activities may take longer than others. For example, one interviewee explained that planning a workshop designed specifically to fit a current school theme, school year group or curriculum topic will take longer than planning a general workshop on their current book topic. It can be said then that organisations often contribute towards costs rather than cover these fully due to a misunderstanding of the actual time taken to plan, prepare and travel to events etc.

Misunderstanding regarding writer's motivation: Organisations interviewed in this research do not wish to exploit writers' and yet many English-language and Welsh-Language writers' interviewed in this study felt exploited. Organisations' view the talks, workshops or judging panels they invited writers' to take part in as 'additional activities' which support writers' income, yet the writers' themselves described these activities as a significant source of their literary income. This was particularly true of Welsh Language writers':

'But if you're writing, especially in Welsh, you're not really doing it for the money – otherwise you wouldn't be doing it in Welsh'.

In addition to this the Welsh-Language writers' felt that their work was not seen to be of the same value:

'There's a feeling if you do something in Welsh it's not as important so there's no need to pay as much to you'.

Lack of experience in HR/Business matters. Many organisations may not have experience in employment matters as the writers' they invite to take part in events are self-employed and the organisers themselves may be voluntary or involved in the organisations for reasons other than monetary gain. In this respect, there may be a lack

of procedure around how and what English-language and Welsh-Language writers are paid. For example, some smaller organisations described have a nominal flat fee which was sometimes altered according to the status of the writer or the relevance of the writer's work to that event. In addition, organisations understand the need to pay English-language and Welsh-Language writers' fairly for the work that they do, often referring to guidelines by the Arts Council or Literature Wales as the basis for fees offered, yet these figures are not regularly re-visited and therefore do not take into account yearly inflation, for example.

Lack of funds: Organisations often described a conflict of interest between paying higher fees to English-language and Welsh-Language writers' and being able to afford a varied programme of events to attract a large enough audience to cover costs. Many organisations struggled to answer the question of whether it is better to have fewer writers for a higher fee or more writers at a lower fee because providing fair rates of pay is important to them, yet having fewer writers' may restrict audience numbers. Organisations acknowledged their role in promoting the literary business and supporting new and emerging English-language and Welsh-Language writers', yet they must balance accounts to survive.

What are the barriers for writers to demand pay that they feel reflects the work of delivering literary events / commissions?

Barriers for English-language and Welsh-Language writers to demand pay that reflects the work they do including: writers' view of their profession, the need to make a living from their work and societies view of 'lifestyle' careers.

Writer's view of their profession: English-language and Welsh-Language writers' who are more business focused are more willing to negotiate rates to ensure they receive pay they feel reflects the work they do while English-language and Welsh-Language writers' who are more community focused are less confident of their financial worth and more

likely to accept lower rates or not question rates offered. Many community-focused writers described accepting work before being told the fee.

'I never think to ask about a fee when I'm asked to give a talk ... it doesn't happen very often anyway'.

The need to make a living from their work: Community focused writers often had an additional source of income or were supported in another way (income for spouse or pension, for example). For these writers, payment was important as a form of recognition and demonstration of the financial worth of their work, but the actual amount was of less importance; for these writers, lower pay was accepted as talks or workshops also offered the opportunity to market their work. In contrast, business focused writers generated a significant amount their income from their literary work. These writers described accepting lower pay at the start of their literary career however, once established, being more confident to reject offers that were poorly paid. These offers were rejected both on principle (belief that their work was of higher financial value), and the cost of undertaking lower paid work rather than spending time on their writing.

Societies view of 'lifestyle' careers: Many English-language and Welsh-Language writers described themselves as being lucky enough to earn an income from something they enjoy, implying a trade-off between fair pay and an idealised career. This is a popular belief amongst those who follow lifestyle careers which are often synonymous with the rural idyll lifestyle (Savage, 2010) describing those who wishing to 'escape the rat-race' and follow their creative dreams in a more rural location. English-language and Welsh-Language writers in this research echo the popular societal view of a creative career being akin to a 'hobby' and therefore payment, of any kind, is a privilege rather than an expectation. English-language and Welsh-Language writers' who exhibited a more business-focus described their frustration in feeling the need to continually explain to members of the public or event organisers the cost implications of giving talks, or workshops, voluntarily even if these are just 15-30 minutes in length.

Lack of business expertise: Many writers' felt they lacked the expertise, skills and training to view their career from a business perspective and therefore were less confident to negotiate fair rates of pay. This was particularly evident in Welsh-Language writers', who did not have a high opinion of their negotiating skills:

'I have negotiated but not successfully'

Calculating an hourly or a daily rate can be difficult for writers' as some of them mentioned that they didn't have the financial skills.

'It would help for people like me to have guidelines to do accounts because I'll have to at the end of the year'.

Finally, many English language and Welsh language writers' felt that they lacked the networking skills required to ensure career progression

'I think for one thing even getting the commission or work in the first place is hard. A lot of that is to do with nepotism and who you know and so on'.

'You have to be in the in-crowd and win Eisteddfods to be published by one of the publishers'

Should the effects of Covid-19 and the current cost-of-living crisis affect how organisations calculate rates of pay (and if so, how)?

In short, yes. Most English-language and Welsh-Language writers are unable to support themselves on their literary income alone at present, therefore the cost-of-living crisis is likely to make this situation worse. One interviewee described searching for additional income to cover the rising costs which they acknowledged would reduce time spent on literary activities. Writers suggested increasing fees and/or expenses to cover inflation, however while organisations recognised the implications of rising costs, they felt unable to make changes at present as, for some, audience levels have not yet returned to Pre-COVID levels:

'Those things are coming back, I've been going back to schools, but they aren't happening so often still. And the festivals are starting to come back. But somethings I've done in the past I haven't gone back to yet'.

Other suggestions included the introduction of emergency/additional grants from organisations such as the Arts Council of Wales to help the creative sector overall.

What are the perceived negative effects of paying writers too little for delivering literary events or commissions?

Paying English-language and Welsh-Language writers' too little for delivering literary events or commissions would make a career in the literary world inaccessible for emerging writers or for those whose literary work is their main income. Interviewees described a scenario where this sector would be dominated by established writers and those who have won awards for their work, followed closely by those who have an additional income to support literary activities. In this scenario emerging young writers would exist the profession or remain as hobbyists until they are able to earn enough income from other non-literary work to support this creative activity. In this case the diversity within writing styles and genres would be depleted.

'But long term, if nothing happens and more money doesn't come from anywhere then people will give up on writing because they can't afford it. They'll turn to something else or get a job in another direction. There's an emergency. If I'm honest, the whole field has been living on so little money that all it takes is a crisis like this to show how precarious that situation is'.

What are the perceived negative effects of paying writers too much for delivering literary events or commissions?

Organisations identified a similar scenario to the one above, where English-language and Welsh-Language writers were paid too little. However, in this case, organisations would not be able to offer as many opportunities to emerging writers, therefore established writers would dominate literary events and commissions, leaving a gap between those

who are established writers' and those who are emerging but struggling to gain opportunities to market work and progress toward becoming better known in the literary world. In this case, as in the previous scenario the diversity within writing styles and genres would be depleted.

Is writing a profession or a hobby?

The fundamental issue identified by English-language and Welsh-Language writers in this study was the view of the profession as a leisure time activity or hobby by the public and commissioning organisations alike. Many writers in this research explained that writing is seen by some as a 'lifestyle' career, rather than a profession, and therefore writers' time does not have a monetary value.

For example, one interviewee explained that they had been asked on a number of occasions to give a talk to school children or at local libraries for little or no fee, the expectation instead being that this was a contribution they should make to their local community. This view was also shared, to some degree, by some organisations who described the amount they paid to writers as a 'contribution' rather than a 'fee' and others who felt that the motive for writers should or would not be in earning an income but in sharing their ideas with others.

Concluding remarks

Writing is described by both the English-language and Welsh-Language writers' themselves and commissioning organisations as a profession, but it is not treated by such by either party. The issue of fair pay is not simply due to low-fees or no-fees offered by some commissioning organisations, but also the acceptance of a 'less than fair pay', by some writers' themselves, which fuels the disparity in fees demonstrated in this report.

The community focused English-language and Welsh-Language writers' often have another income (a pension, for example) and this means they can afford to attend events

for a very low level of payment, or nothing at all. Instead, these writers' feel they are contributing to society or the literary world in general, and this is important to them. However, it does make it more difficult for those who rely on the income to ask for a fee that covers their time. The solution to this is not immediately apparent; highlighting awareness of writing as a profession rather than a hobby could help to reduce this, alternatively, as suggested by one of the writers suggested, a two-tier approach to payment could be implemented, with those who do not have other income being paid more. However, this could be very difficult to implement in practice.

Literature Wales is seen as treating the writers fairly. However, there are other organisations that are not seen as being fair to the writers. Although some organisations do publish guidelines about how much authors should be paid, there is very little support for writers when these guidelines are not followed.

English-language and Welsh-Language writers' living in rural areas feel that they had fewer opportunities to be paid for attending events. This did change during the Covid pandemic, and some writers were able to do more work online. One of the issues with calculating a standard rate for writers is that they all have different costs and, therefore, financial training in how to calculate their own costs alongside guidelines for requesting/offering is needed.

Recommendations

- English-language and Welsh-Language writers require further training and/or guidelines in financial matters, grant applications and marketing to help build their confidence in requesting fair pay for work. This could be offered through organisations such as Literature Wales who could create an online platform of opportunities for writers which could include business training, promotion and networking opportunities.
- There needs to be greater co-ordination between literary organisations in Wales to ensure consistent treatment of the writers. Commissioning organisations need

to take greater responsibility for fostering new and emerging literature and supporting Welsh-Language work, this could be achieved by adopting a 'one fee for all' approach to commissions and events. This fee needs to be revised annually to take into consideration inflation.

- English-language and Welsh-Language writers' themselves have a responsibility to request fair pay. Greater awareness should be made of the detrimental impact of accepting lower or no fees for professional work on the sector overall, encouraging those who are more community focused to consider also the welfare of writers who earn a significant percentage of their income from this work.
- English-language and Welsh-Language writers' and organisations representing their welfare could consider the creation of a Writers' Guild, which would have the ability to monitor fair pay, set guidelines for fees and provide support when published guidelines are not followed.

Reference List

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A – English Language Writers

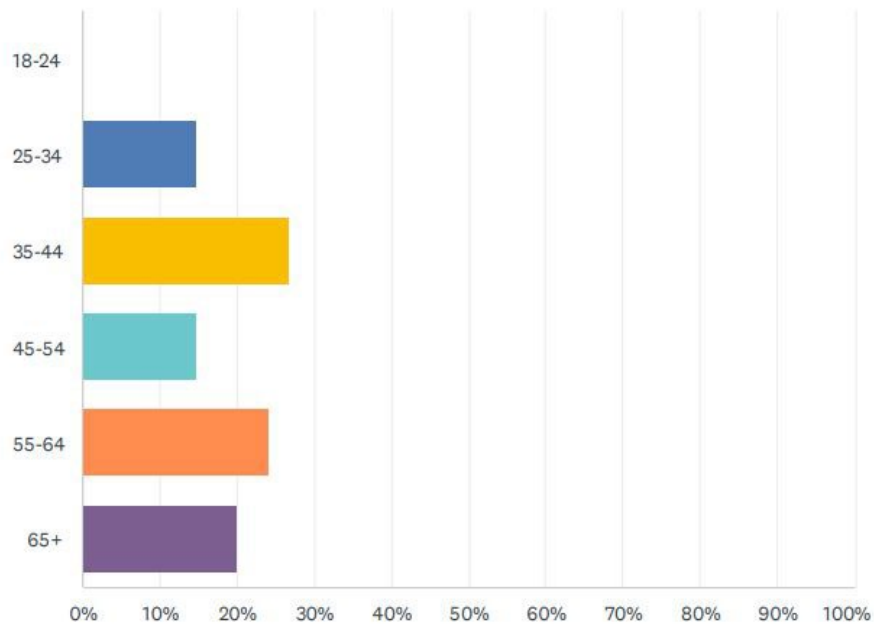


Figure 1: Age of respondents

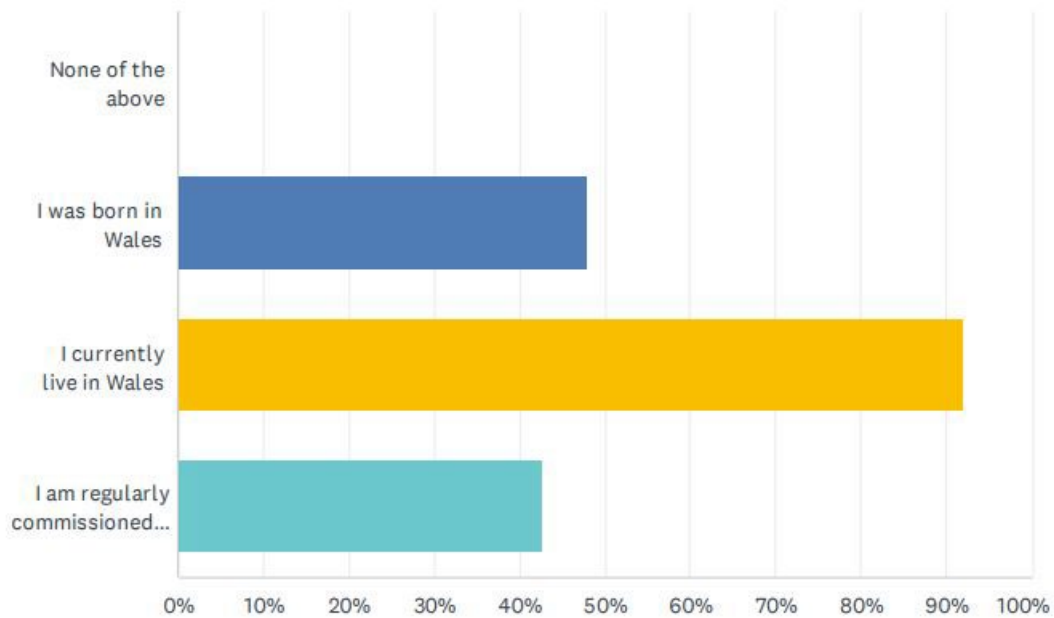


Figure 2: Respondents born in Wales, currently living in Wales, or regularly commissioned by organisations in Wales.

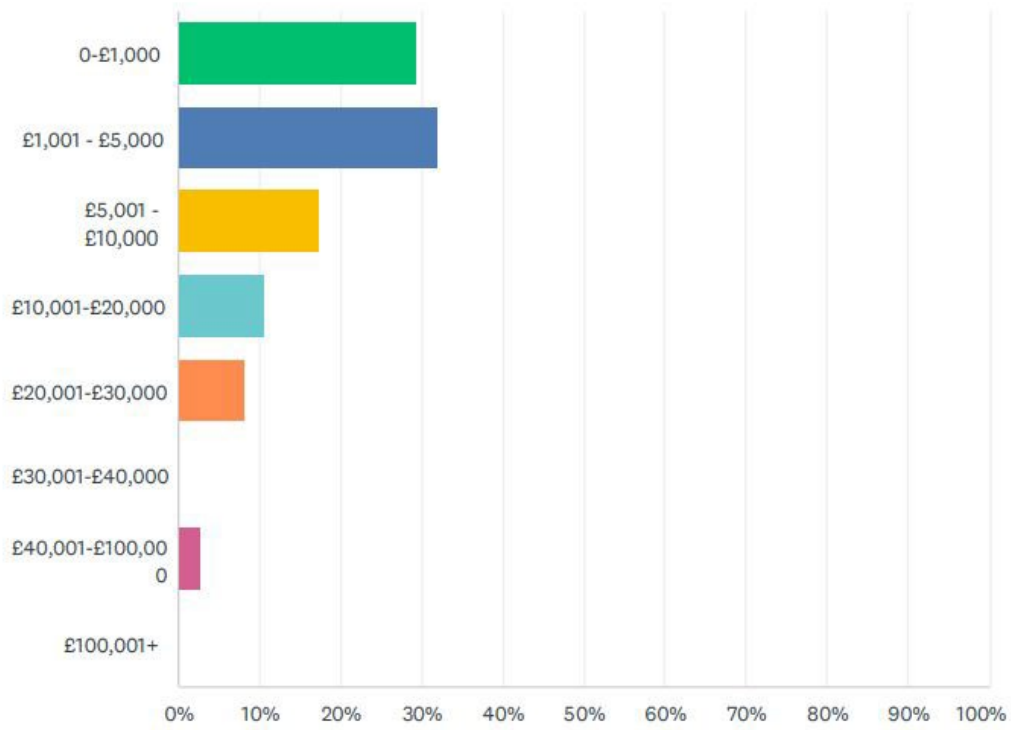


Figure 3: Annual income from literary work

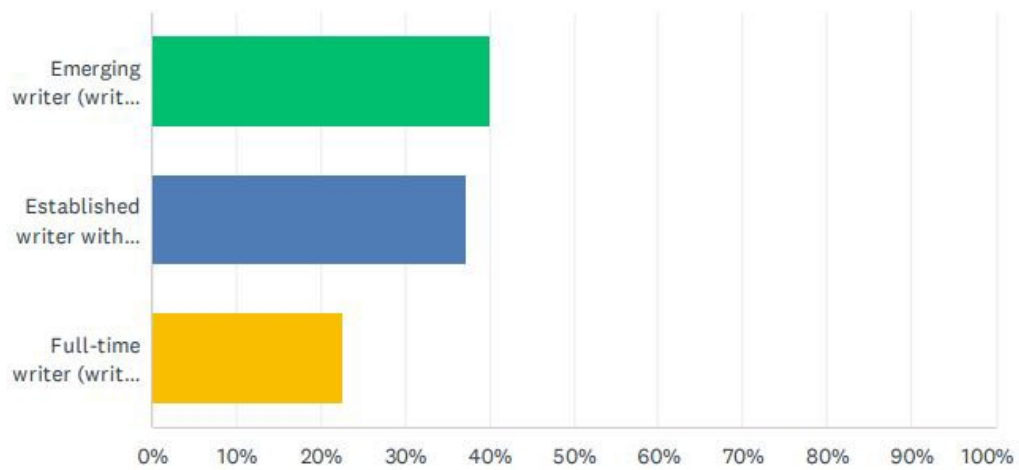


Figure 4: Emerging, established or full-time writers'

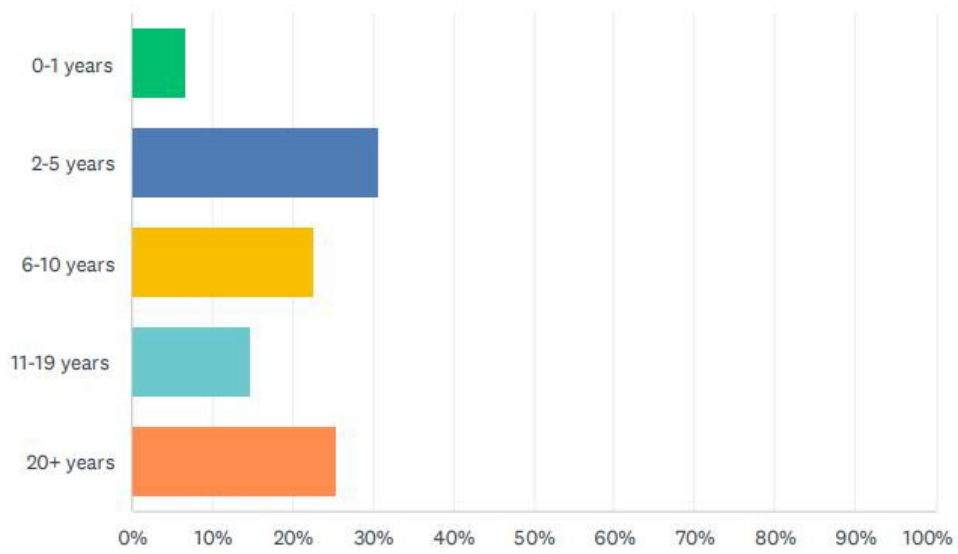


Figure 5: Length of time receiving an income from literary work

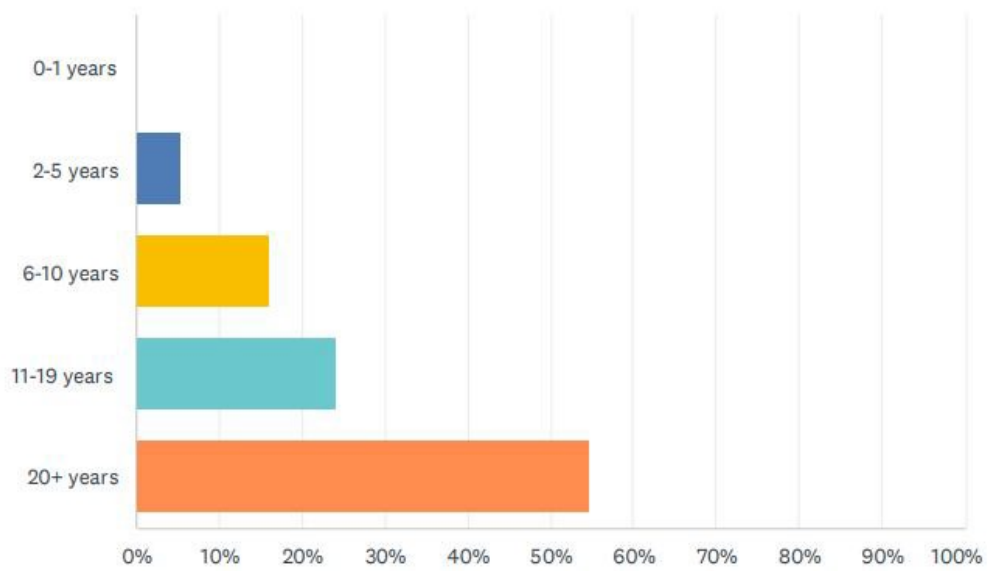


Figure 6: Length of time writing

#	TALK OR LECTURE
1	100 an hour
2	200
3	150
4	200 per day
5	300
6	£150/day
7	£175 (some universities) / 100 (most common) / 50 (panel / shared / short festival set)
8	300/event
9	£150 per event
10	never been paid
11	100 an hour
12	25 per hour
13	£50+
14	250 (day)
15	£25-50 p/hour
16	£50-£75 for anywhere up to one hour
17	100

Figure 7: Fees received for Talk or Lecture

#	CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP
1	350 a day
2	250
3	150
4	200

42 / 75

Writers' Fees Research Wales 2022

5	100-200
6	250
7	£300/day
8	£80 - £150
9	100
10	150
11	£250 per workshop
12	150
13	50 per our
14	250 per day
15	£125+ Depending on workshop
16	75 - 175 (per workshop, 1-2 hours)
17	£250 p/day
18	30 per hour
19	250
20	£100-£150 for 2/3 hours
21	£300-400 p/d £125 p/h
22	100
23	100 per 90 min event
24	100 pounds per hour
25	£120 half day
26	3200
27	£350 per day
28	£150

Figure 8: Fees received for workshop

#	BOOK SIGNING (NOT INCLUDING A TALK OR Q&A COMPONENT)
1	Free
2	50
3	nothing
4	been paid only travel expenses and a 'free lunch'
5	£0

44 / 75

Writers' Fees Research Wales 2022

6	£125 p/h
7	100 pounds per hour
8	£50
9	0
10	£75
11	0
12	50 per hour
13	0.00
14	50
15	no charge

Figure 9: Fees received for book signing

8	I was paid £540 from BBC for 14 min slot broadcast x 2 and licensing fee
---	--

Figure 10: BBC fees.

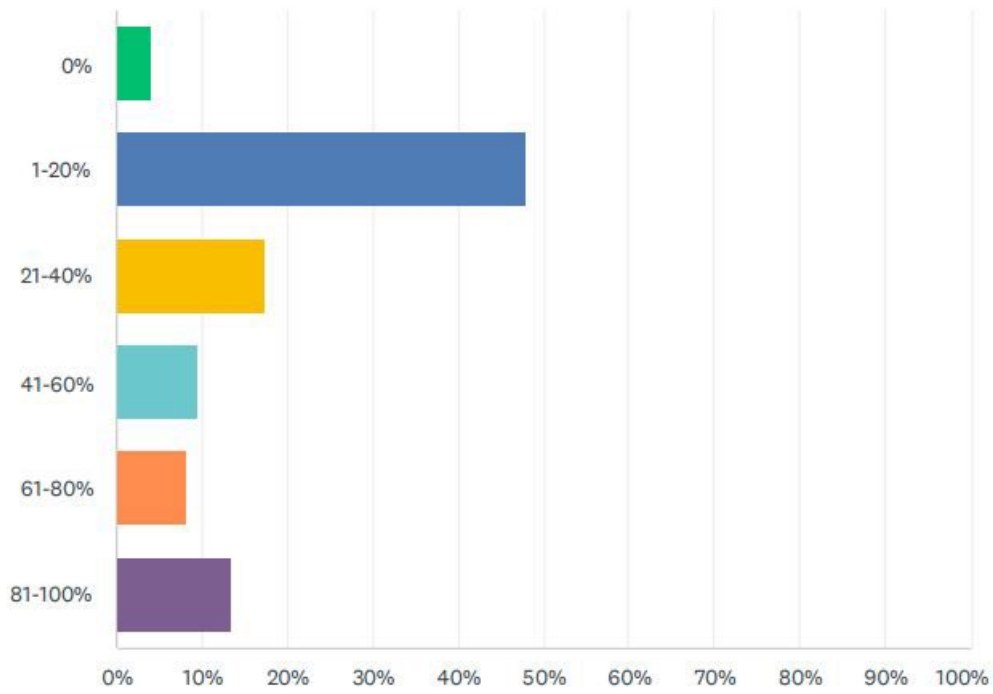


Figure 11: Percentage of Income from Writing

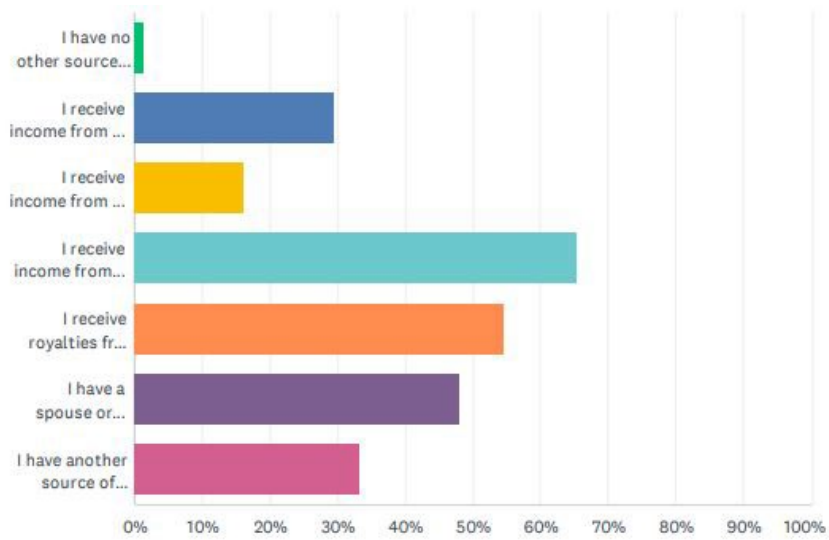
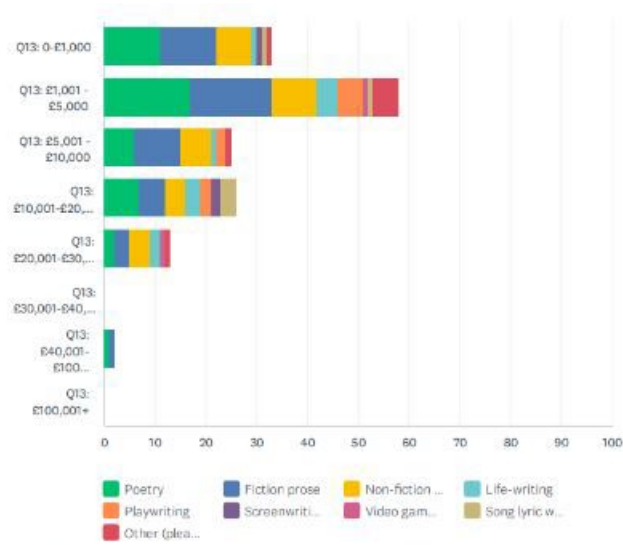


Figure 12: Additional income



	POETRY	FICTION PROSE	NON-FICTION PROSE	LIFE-WRITING	PLAYWRITING	SCREENWRITING	VIDEO GAME OR INTERACTIVE FICTION WRITING	SONG LYRIC WRITING	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	TOTAL
Q13: 0-£1,000 (A)	50.00% 11	50.00% 11	31.82% 7	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	4.55% 1	4.55% 1	43.42% 33
Q13: £1,001 - £5,000 (B)	70.83% 17	66.67% 16	37.50% 9	16.67% 4	20.83% 5	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	76.32% 58
Q13: £5,001 - £10,000 (C)	46.15% 6	69.23% 9	46.15% 6	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	32.89% 25
Q13: £10,001 - £20,000 (D)	77.78% 7	55.56% 5	44.44% 4	33.33% 3	22.22% 2	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	0.00% 0	34.21% 26
Q13: £20,001 - £30,000 (E)	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	17.11% 13
Q13: £30,001 - £40,000 (F)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Q13: £40,001 - £100,000 (G)	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.63% 2
Q13: £100,001+ (H)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Total Respondents	44	45							8	76

Figure 13: Annual income and type of writer

Appendix B – Welsh Language Writers'

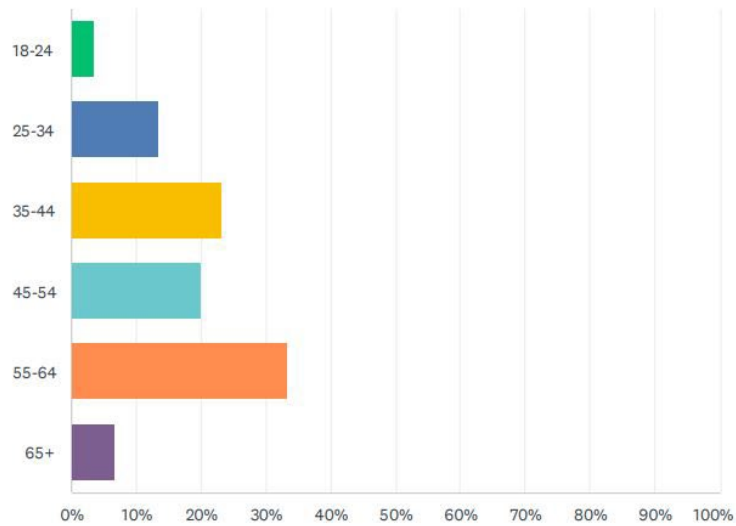


Figure 1: Age of respondents

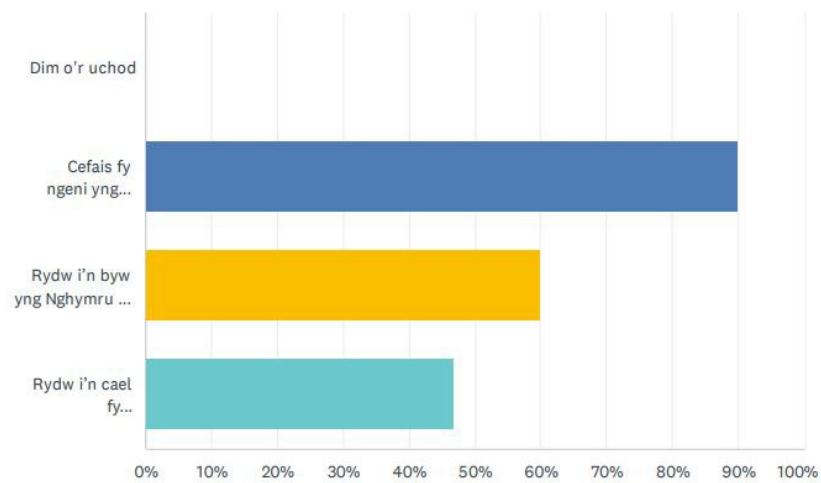


Figure 2: Respondents born in Wales, currently living in Wales, or regularly commissioned by organisations in Wales.

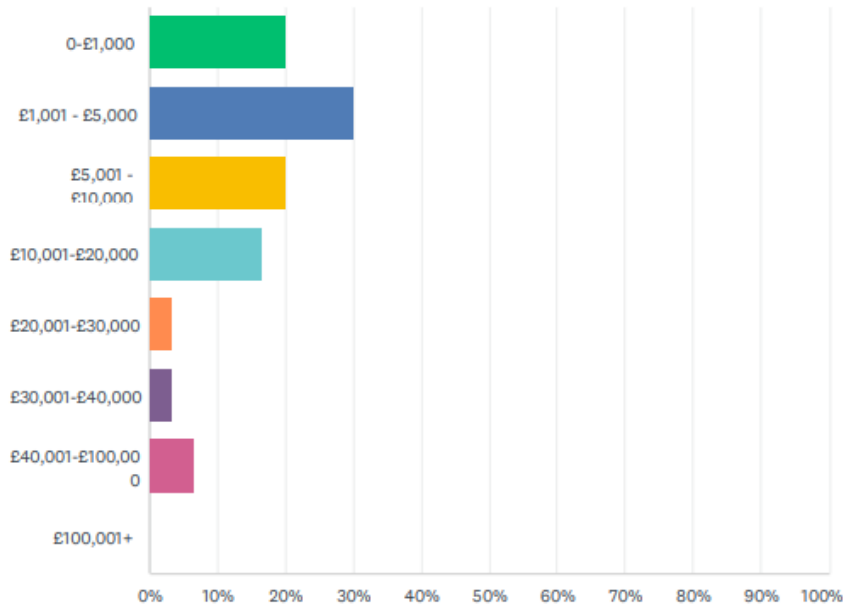


Figure 3: Annual income from literary work

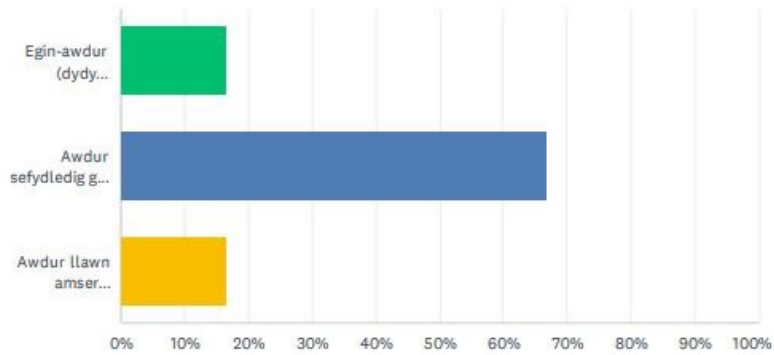


Figure 4: Emerging, Established or Full-time writers'

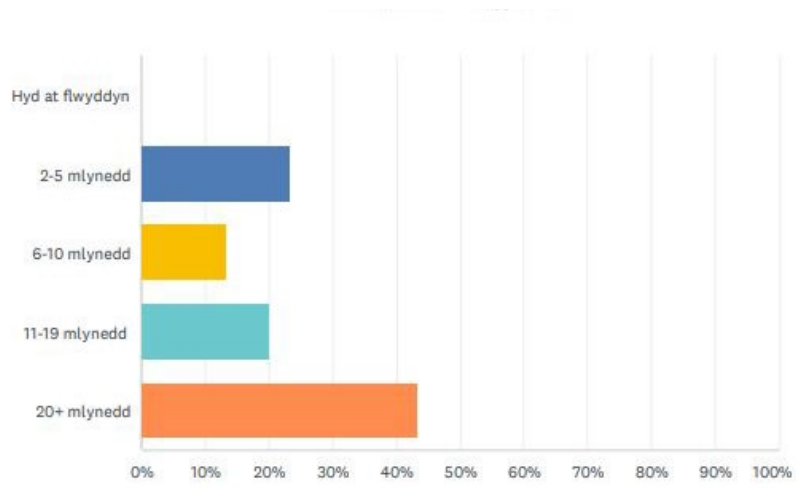


Figure 5: Length of time receiving an income from literary work

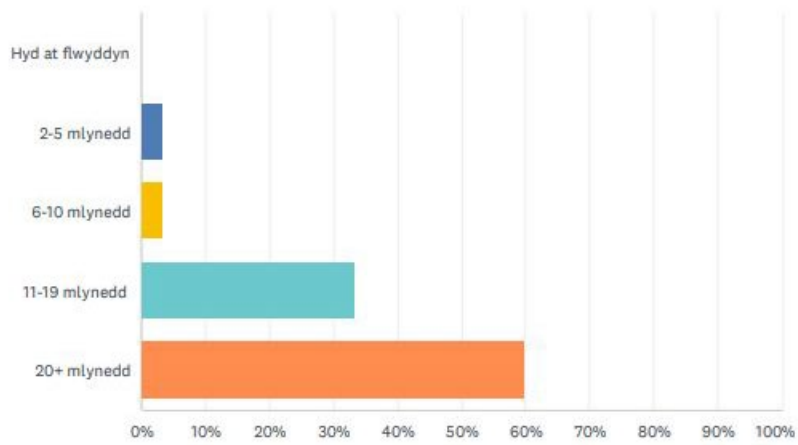


Figure 6: Length of time writing

SGWRS NEU DDARLITH

£50 y sgwrs

200

100

50

£60

30-400

£80 am noson gan ddibynnu ar y gymdeithas

100

300

70

75

150/ awr

Dibynnu os yw'n sgwrs wedi'i baratoi yn barod neu beidio - £100 am nosweithiau gyda chymdeithas lenyddol, ond tueddu i ddisgwyl tal ychwanegol os am baratoi darlith o'r newydd at achlysur penodol

150 / ddarlith

30

35 / 62

Ymchwil Ffioedd Awduron Cymru 2022

100 y sgwrs/ ddarlith

£150

£40

£120 (yn dibynnu ar faint o waith paratoi sydd)

0

£150

£200

£100 yr awr

MYW lleol- £40. Myw Pellach -£80. Sefydliad arall - o leia £120 & treuliau

50

Figure 7: Fees received for Talk or Lecture

CWRS YSGRIFENNU CREADIGOL (UNDYDD)
150
150-300
£300 y dydd
250
160
£300
250 y dydd
£350
£200
£400 y dydd
£300
250

Figure 8: Fees received for workshop

0
dim
30
0
30
£0
cael dim fel arfer

Figure 9: Fees received for book signing

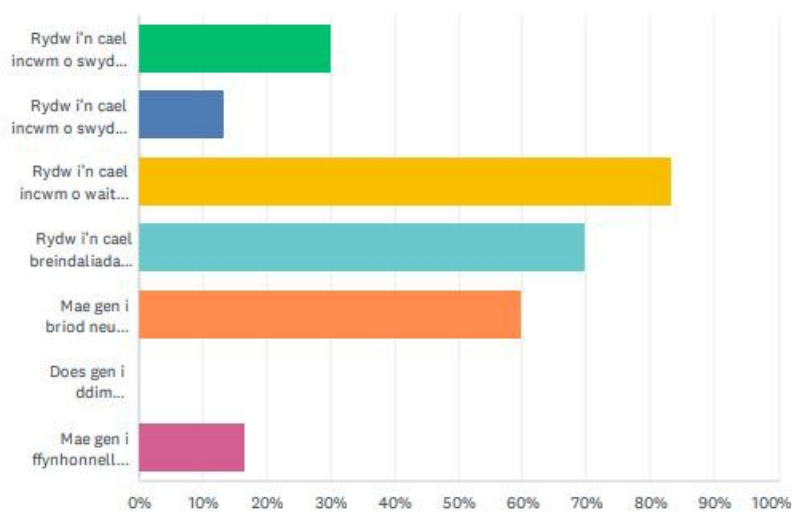


Figure 10: Percentage of Income from Writing

	BARDDONIAETH	RHYDDIAITH FFUGLENNOL	RHYDDIAITH FFEITHIOL	YSGRIFENNU AM FYWYD	YSGRIFENNU DRAMAU	SGRIPTIO I'R SGRIN	YSGRIFENNU FFUGLEN RYNGWEITHIOL NEU GEMAU FIDEO	YSGRIFENNU GEIRIAU CANELON	ARALL (NODWCH YMA)	T
Q13: 0- £1,000 (A)	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	21
Q13: £1,001 - £5,000 (B)	66.67% 6	77.78% 7	44.44% 4	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	22.22% 2	8:
Q13: £5,001 - £10,000 (C)	50.00% 3	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	4:
Q13: £10,001- £20,000 (D)	40.00% 2	100.00% 5	40.00% 2	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	4:
Q13: £20,001- £30,000 (E)	100.00% 1	100.00% 1	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11
Q13: £30,001- £40,000 (F)	100.00% 1	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	11
Q13: £40,001- £100,000 (G)	100.00% 2	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	2:
Q13: £100,001+ (H)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1
Total Respondents	17	20	13	3	7	5	0	6	3	

Figure 13: Annual income and type of writer