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## Poet Laureate Simon Armitage to headline HuddLitFest2024

The multi-award-winning Huddersfield Literature Festival will return in April 2024, headlined by **Simon Armitage**. The Poet Laureate will give a poetry reading followed by a performance with his band **LYR** at the Lawrence Batley Theatre on Thursday 11 April. Tickets will go on sale through the LBT box office on Friday 24 November.

The Festival will run from 18-28 April 2024, after securing a 30% increase in Arts Council funding following a very successful 2023 festival and two award wins in the past year.

Winner of the **Accessible and Inclusive Award** at the prestigious Yorkshire Post Tourism Awards (2022), HuddLitFest2024 will offer a wide representation of authors and performers. Featured novelists will include Costa Prize winner **Monique Roffey** for her new novel **Passiontide** and acclaimed local author **Sairish Hussain** who follows **The Family Tree** with a new novel **Hidden Fires**. Comedian and actor **Helen Lederer** will entertain with stories from her memoir **Not That I'm Bitter** and **Alex Wheatle MBE** will discuss his memoir **Sufferah: Memoir of a Brixton Reggae Head**. Professor **Audrey Osler** will explore ideas around migration, identity and belonging in **Where Are You From? No, Where Are You Really From?** and poetry events will include the launch of new collections by **Steve Ely** and **Rose Condo**.

A partnership with MACFEST will see a music and poetry celebration of the 13th-century Persian philosopher-poet **Rumi**, and a performance of **Disunited Jukebox** will bring to life specially commissioned contributions from **Neil Gaiman**, **Mary Talbot** and **Ken MacLeod** among others, in a contemporary anthology chamber opera.

Online events will feature **Emma Donoghue**, whose novel is based on the life of the young Anne Lister (Gentleman Jack), a celebration of the centenary of the birth of **James Baldwin** in partnership with Kirklees Local TV, and a series of creative writing workshops.

Children will enjoy free eco-craft and crime-busting workshops, along with the chance to meet **The Tiger Who Came to Tea** and to find out about space exploration with children's author and illustrator **Kate Pankhurst**.

Community projects will range from specially commissioned activities with **Dark Horse Theatre** and **Give... a few words** to projects with **Conscious Youth** and **Aspire**. There will also be an expanded Schools Programme of workshops and activities. Firm favourites such as the **Stafflex Free Family Day**, **Poetry Slam** and **Polari LGBTQ+ literary salon** will return, along with discussion topics, family events, creative writing workshops and wellbeing activities.

Many of the live events will be hybrid, delivered in partnership with Kirklees Local TV, demonstrating the Festival's ongoing commitment to accessibility.

Festival Director Michelle Hodgson said: "Our 2024 Festival is shaping up to be one of the best, with a lot more to be announced in the coming weeks. Increased investment from the University of Huddersfield and the Arts Council has had a real and tangible effect on what we can deliver. As the cost-of-living crisis deepens, we will continue to offer many free and low-cost events, including online events, which we hope will encourage even more people to engage with the Festival."

Events will be available to view and book on the Festival website later this autumn and further information can be found at: <https://www.huddlifest.org.uk/>

### **Notes for Editors:**

#### **Media contact:**

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Hi-res mages are available upon request.

### **About [Huddersfield Literature Festival](#)**

Huddersfield Literature Festival (HLF) is an award-winning two-week Festival held annually in March/April. A blended Festival of 50+ digital, outdoor and venue-based events held online and at accessible spaces in Huddersfield, HLF champions accessibility, diversity and under-represented groups.

Showcasing emerging writers and artists alongside major names, the Festival offers a diverse programme of author talks, workshops, discussion topics, performance poetry, multi-arts performances, wellbeing projects and family friendly events.

Innovative special projects and commissions, often inspired by local community partnerships, are designed to promote community cohesion, improve wellbeing and proactively engage with under-represented artists, performers and audiences.

With many free and low-cost events, including some with live subtitling, and Access Guides to key venues, HLF promotes accessibility with a view to offering more opportunities for a wider range of people to enjoy arts and culture.

Established in 2006, HLF is a major fixture on the town's cultural calendar.

Patrons: Sir Patrick Stewart OBE and Lemn Sissay OBE.

**Awards & nominations:**

Creative Champions, South Pennines Park Awards – WINNER 2023

Accessible & Inclusive Tourism, Yorkshire Post Tourism Awards – WINNER 2022

Kirklees Diversity, Equality and Innovation Awards – finalist 2022

Welcome to Yorkshire White Rose Awards – finalist 2016, 2017 & 2020

Examiner Community Award for the Arts – WINNER 2017



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