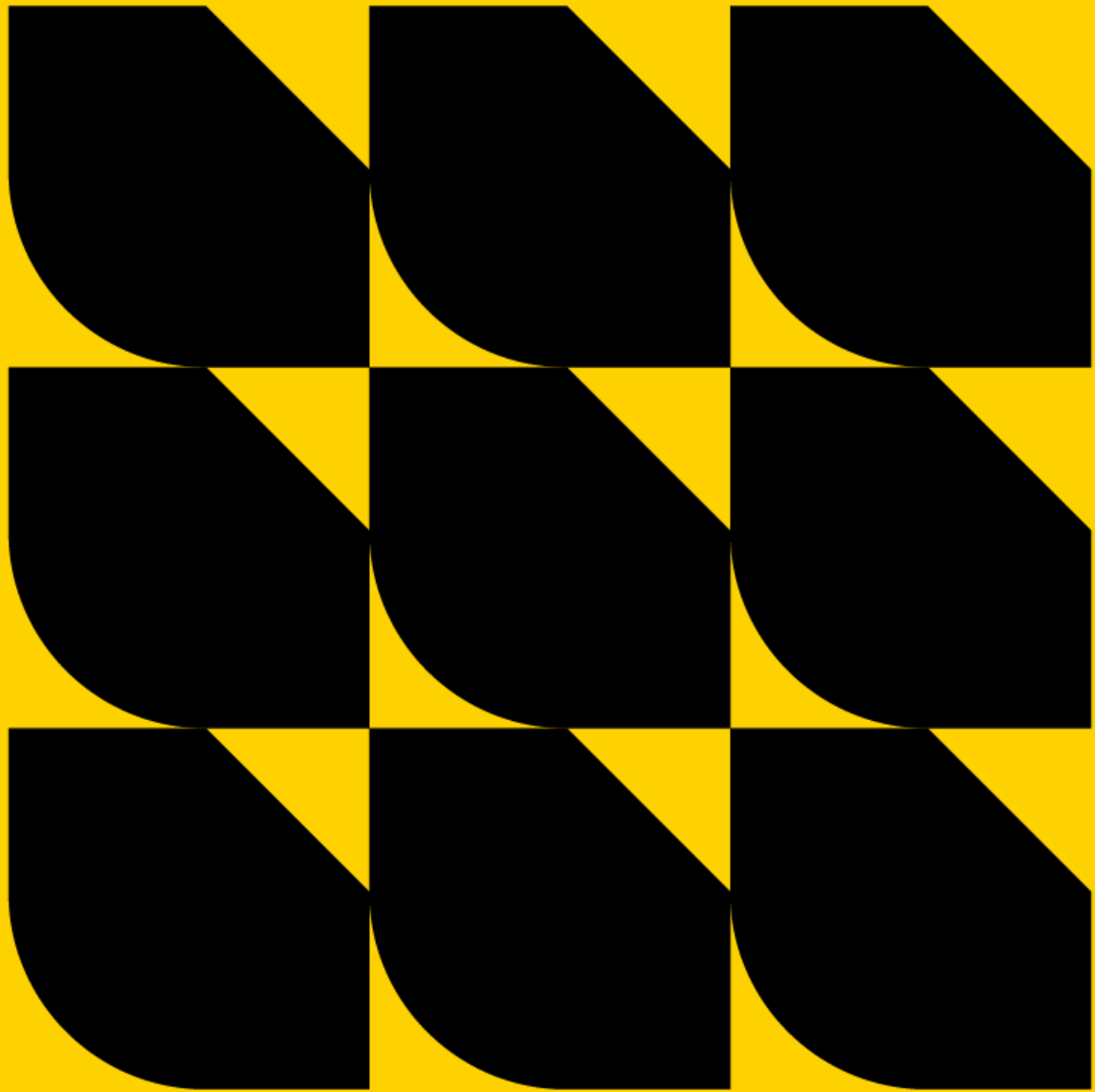




Authors' Licensing &
Collecting Society
Review of the Year
2024–2025

ALCS



Our purpose

ALCS exists to support, champion and fight for authors.

1

We support our membership by always being proactive and outward-looking.

2

We strive to be the best we can be in all of our activities and celebrate our successes on behalf of writers.

3

We champion the protection and promotion of authors' rights across the globe.

Our vision

We support our Members' ability to write by increasing their income. By educating as many people as possible, we promote the respect of copyright. We celebrate the value writers bring to our world, fighting for their rights and giving them a powerful collective voice. We want all writers to thrive in our society. We make the complex easy.

Our values are important to us

We're bold

We support our membership by always being proactive and outward-looking. We seek to develop opportunities to support new streams of income, as well as to protect existing ones for the benefit of our 125,000+ Members worldwide in what is an ever-changing digital landscape. We explain to legislators at all levels the ways that they can better support writers. We diligently research the writers for whom we are holding money so that they can benefit from ALCS.

We make an impact

We champion the protection and promotion of authors' rights across the globe. We educate and support through partnerships and initiatives to enable our members to work in an environment that recognises and rewards them fairly for the work they do. We strive to create positive change for authors and to aim for excellence in all we do.

We take pride

We strive to be the best we can be in all of our activities and celebrate our successes on behalf of writers. We recognise the central role that writers hold in society, creating works for education and entertainment that benefit us all. We are proud to be ambitious for writers and to celebrate our successes on their behalf.



Review of the Year – Chair

Being appointed Chair of ALCS this year has been an incredible honour and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to represent and champion the rights of authors. In my first months, I've had the privilege of working closely with our Board and Executive, as well as meeting staff and members. What has struck me most is the clarity of our purpose and the professionalism with which colleagues pursue it every day. I am grateful for the warm welcome I've received, and impressed by the commitment of everyone involved with ALCS to ensure that writers are paid fairly for the use of their work.

In the past year, we have seen AI continue to be adopted at scale and embedded into both our working practices and everyday lives, research by KPMG found that 69% of the UK now use AI on a regular basis. As adoption accelerates, so too does the awareness that this progress has been built on the widespread and unauthorised use of works protected by copyright. Earlier this year, we saw rightful indignation from the writing community about revelations that Meta had used a pirated database to train its AI. This underscored the urgent need for a long-term settlement to the issue of AI and copyright that respects the rights of writers and offers genuine transparency, choice and the option of fair payment.

This need has been recognised by the Government, who launched their consultation on AI and copyright at the end of 2024. While it was encouraging to see them consult with stakeholders, their preferred option of a broad copyright exception and placing the onus on creators to "opt-out" was rightfully criticised and prompted an unprecedented backlash from creators and the wider sector, including ALCS.

The unity from creators and the "unprecedented" response we saw caused the Government to step back and rethink their approach, demonstrating that we are not passive bystanders and that we do have the power to shape the path forward. I want to thank every ALCS member who responded to the consultation, wrote to their MP, or just helped spread the word. Rest assured that in the months and years ahead, we will continue to strongly advocate for our members and ensure that writers aren't sacrificed on the altar of technological progress.

For ALCS to do this effectively, it is vital that the Board possesses the skills and experience needed in a rapidly changing landscape. Voting is currently underway to elect two new Board members, one with experience working with digital technologies, and the other with experience working on audiovisual productions. We have fantastic candidates for both posts and I'm confident that whoever our membership votes for will have the expertise to drive the organisation forward and complement our already knowledgeable Board.

ALCS has adapted across decades of change, from new technologies to new ways of consuming content. We were founded by pioneering writers on the principle of "no use without payment", and we will work tirelessly to ensure that this remains true in the age of AI. I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues on the ALCS Board, as well as the ALCS staff, who have made me feel welcome and helped me to hit the ground running. I am excited to see what we can achieve together in the year ahead.



Lord Clement-Jones, ALCS Chair



Barbara Hayes, ALCS Chief Executive

It is both a privilege and great responsibility to lead ALCS through another year, particularly at a time when writers and the wider creative sector continue to face uncertainty and disruption. This past year has once again highlighted the resilience and adaptability of our organisation, as well as the dedication and talent of everyone who contributes to it.

Review of the Year – CEO

At ALCS, our measure of success is simple: how much money we pay to authors. I am delighted to say that we have once again reached new heights, paying more money to more members than ever before.

In March 2025, we made the largest distribution in our history: more than £35 million to over 111,000 writers. Together with our September 2024 payments, that brought the total to over £47 million in the past 12 months. These figures aren't abstract – they represent bills paid, laptops replaced or a much-needed treat for our members. In an often uncertain and precarious environment, we hope to offer some sense of stability for our members. Behind this success is an extraordinary collective effort, with every Department working together, playing their role to ensure payments are delivered accurately and on time. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all ALCS staff who make this possible.

Our ability to deliver such impressive payments depends on continually adapting to new uses of writers' works. One example of this is the launch of the Audiovisual Licensing Agency (AVLA) alongside our partners, creating new streams of secondary income through licensing broadcasts in hospitality settings. At the same time, we face the challenge of unlicensed uses of works – none more pressing than AI.

Our AI survey revealed that a large majority (81%) of our members support collective licensing for AI. Responding to this, we worked with the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) to update existing licences to cover workplace uses of licensed works in prompts, and we are collaborating with the CLA and Publishers' Licensing Services on a pilot training licence. These initiatives are designed to prove that licensing solutions can be a fair and practical solution – one

that ensures writers are properly rewarded if they choose to license their work for AI uses.

The changing digital environment also brings risks. The alarming rise in cyber-attacks on UK institutions, such as the British Library and the Public Lending Right database, has underscored the fragility of critical system infrastructures. Safeguarding our members' data, and ensuring the resilience of our systems remain top priorities for us. This past year, we have worked to make our systems more resilient, we expanded cyber-security training for all staff and have a number of additional security measures that we hope to roll out in the coming year to keep members' online accounts secure.

And of course, it is vital that we hear from and engage with our members. Over the past year we have held informative webinars to support new members, ran focus groups to deepen our understanding of your priorities and held member receptions in Edinburgh and York, which are always occasions that remind us of the warmth and strength of this community. These conversations are invaluable: they keep us grounded, accountable and aligned with your needs.

I want to conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to another successful year for ALCS. To our staff, for their commitment; to the Board, for their guidance; and above all to our members, who remain at the heart of everything we do. The year ahead will no doubt bring fresh turbulence and uncertainty, but I am confident that together we will continue to thrive, adapt, and uphold the rights and livelihoods of authors everywhere.

Our membership

During the 2024/25 financial year, the membership of ALCS increased by 4,951, growing from 123,423 to **128,374**.

To make sure we're meeting our members' expectations, we began asking members 'how we did today'. We're delighted that by March 2025, our satisfaction score stands at **4.78** out of 5. We'll continue working hard to do even better in the year ahead.

Our members are the lifeblood of our organisation. So over this past year, we took the opportunity to connect with our membership across the UK. We held Member Receptions in York and Edinburgh, alongside focus groups to find out more about our members and their views.



Key figures

○ 128,374 members (as of 31 March 2025)



○ Amount of money collected:
£45,234,921

○ Amount of money paid out:
£47,448,750



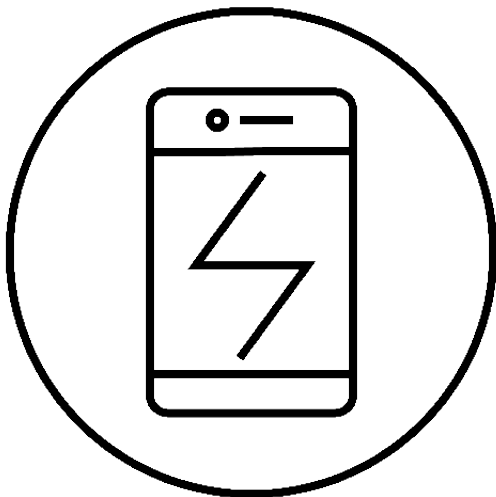
○ Number of staff: 42

○ Overall commission rate: 6%

Our way of working

For the last three years, we have been engaging in a major redevelopment and upgrade of our internal member IT systems. To minimise risk and potential disruption, we are rolling out the revamped system gradually on a team by team basis. We are delighted that the first Department is now utilising the new system, and are already repaing the rewards of our extensive efforts.

This has been a huge undertaking which has involved considerable time and resources. However, we believe this is a necessary endeavour to ensure our technology is able to meet the growing output of our dynamic membership and the new and diverse uses of their works. This project will ensure that we continue to operate in the efficient and secure manner that our members expect of us.



The security of your data is at the forefront of our minds as we navigate this journey. Ensuring the resilience of our systems has been a priority as we adopt new ways of working, along with ensuring that our staff have the knowledge and skills to uphold the highest security standards. Work is also underway to introduce further protections to ensure members' online accounts and data remain secure.



Campaigning

Through our campaigning work, we advocate for authors to have their rights recognised and respected. We're involved in projects that raise awareness of copyright, provide educational resources and celebrate and champion the creative industries.

Copyright and support for writers

Copyright is the cornerstone of the creative industries, ensuring that creators retain control over how their works are used by others. Despite this, copyright is often poorly understood, even by rightsholders. Raising awareness of copyright, both in the UK and internationally, is therefore one of our key strategic objectives. We have worked with a number of partners over the year to support this objective.

We're proud partners of the Carnegie Awards, the CLiPPA Poetry Award, National Poetry Day, First Story and the National Reading Champions Quiz. Through these partnerships we are able to reach a wide and engaged audience to ensure the next generation of readers and writers understand the importance of copyright. We also help to support the creative industries by sponsoring relevant projects

through our Cultural Support and Development Fund. Projects we support include Translated By, Bristol, a festival celebrating literary translation, Draw Breath, a month of well-being activities organised by New Writing South and Comic Boom, a podcast on comic books as an educational tool.

We also continued to host the ALCS Annual Awards in 2025, featuring three awards that we're proud to sponsor: the ALCS Educational Writers' Award, the UK's only award for creative non-fiction, the Ruth Rendell Award for Services to Literacy and the V.S. Pritchett Prize Short Story Prize. We work closely with The Society of Authors, the National Literacy Trust and The Royal Society of Literature on these awards respectively, and each helps celebrate authors in unique ways.



Campaigning

Advocacy

Our advocacy work involves everything from engaging with Parliamentarians on policy to gaining media coverage for important issues for writers. We frequently work with other creators' organisations with mutual interests to amplify our voices and ensure writers' perspectives are always considered. Our aim is to protect the secondary rights of UK writers and ensure their rights continue to be respected as new and developing secondary uses of their works emerge.

In December 2024, the Government announced a public consultation on the issue of AI and copyright. ALCS produced a response to the consultation, making the case for transparency measures and the fostering of a dynamic licensing market, and a rejection of the broad copyright exception and opt-out model proposed by the Government. As well as submitting our own response, we joined our partners in the creative sector in the Make it Fair campaign, supporting our members to produce their own responses to the consultation to make the case for creators. As a result of the campaign with our partners, the consultation received an unprecedented 11,500 responses.

In 2024, we launched the Write Share, a suite of proposed initiatives designed to remunerate writers for new and emerging digital uses. One of these solutions is SCOOP, a joint-venture with DACS, PICSEL and the National Union of Journalists, which aims to remunerate freelance journalists by developing collective agreements between representatives and companies securing commercial returns from the use of their work.

Having long-campaigned for the appointment of a Freelancer Commissioner to Government to better represent the interests of freelance creatives, we were encouraged to see the Department for Culture, Media and Sport announce plans for a creative Freelance Champion in June this year. We hope this role will be sufficiently empowered to effectively represent freelancers and address long-standing challenges for this significant part of the UK's creative workforce.

All Party Writers Group

ALCS continues to serve as the secretariat for the All Party Writers Group (APWG) in Westminster. The APWG is a group of Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum who meet to better understand issues affecting writers and represent their interests in Parliament. At the APWG Winter Reception in December 2024, we launched the results of our AI member survey, sharing our findings with Parliamentarians and industry leaders.

Internationally, we provide the secretariat for the International Authors Forum (IAF), which campaigns for authors worldwide. This year, IAF appointed Kevin Fitzgerald, previously at the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization, as its General Secretary. IAF was a signatory to an international charter on "Culture and Innovation" at the Paris 2025 AI Action Summit and played an active role at the World Intellectual Property Organisation's copyright committee at the UN.



Research

Throughout summer 2024, we surveyed our membership on their attitudes to **artificial intelligence** and licensing, receiving more than 13,500 responses. We published the results in December 2024. Key findings included:

Choice

- Only **7%** of those that knew their works have been used to train AI gave **permission** for this use.
- 91%** felt that they should be asked for permission to use their works.



Remuneration

- 96%** of writers would want to receive **remuneration** if their works have already been used to train AI, even if it meant no credit.
- 92%** of respondents said that they would want to receive compensation for any **historic use** of their work to train AI.



Licensing

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alcs.co.uk/research



Our ESG strategy

ALCS has an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, to help us make sure we consider environmental protection, that we embrace social issues and ensure that the company is run in the right way.

Environmental

Building resilience for the long term

- Environmental and social policy

Social

Ensuring equitable access to opportunity

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Ethical Investments Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Modern Slavery Statement
- Hybrid Working

Governance

Encouraging a culture of ethics and accountability

- Risk Management
- Corporate Governance



Governance

ALCS Board of Directors (at 31 March 2025)

Lord Tim Clement-Jones
Chair

Barbara Hayes
Chief Executive

Rachael Davis-Featherstone
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2024)

Chun Kit Fan
Non-Executive Director
(appointed June 2023)

Maggie Gee
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2022)

James McConnachie
Non-Executive Director
(re-elected November 2022)

Okechukwu Nzelu
Non-Executive Director
(re-appointed 2024)

Katharine Quarmby
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2024)

Edwin Thomas
Non-Executive Director
(appointed June 2023)

Board Committees

The following Board Committees and their remits were in place for the financial year 2024/2025:

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee monitors the financial, accounting, investment, taxation and associated matters affecting the Company's performance and reports back to the Board as requested or as appropriate.

Oversight and Scrutiny Committee

This committee monitors the activities and performance of the Executive team and the supplier who are responsible for developing the new ALCS systems and reports back to the Board. This is a limited time committee.

Nominations and Governance Committee

The Nominations and Governance Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Board on such matters as Committee membership (non-executive and externals), co-options to the Board and recruitment at Board level as and when appropriate.

People and Remuneration Committee

The People and Remuneration Committee reviews, analyses and makes recommendations to the Board on matters pertaining to the remuneration policy.



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