

DISTINCTIVENESS IN THE POETRY ACTIVITY OF THE LEEDS CITY REGION



01 Introduction

This project investigates the poetry culture of the Leeds City Region, examining how poetry is created, shared, and experienced across diverse communities. Conducted in partnership with the National Poetry Centre, the research aims to map, analyse, and critically reflect on community-based poetry activity across the city.

02 Objectives

- Identify key community poetry groups and networks.
- Examine barriers to access and inclusion.
- Explore how NPC can support and connect them.

03 Methodology

Desk research

→ Contacting stakeholders

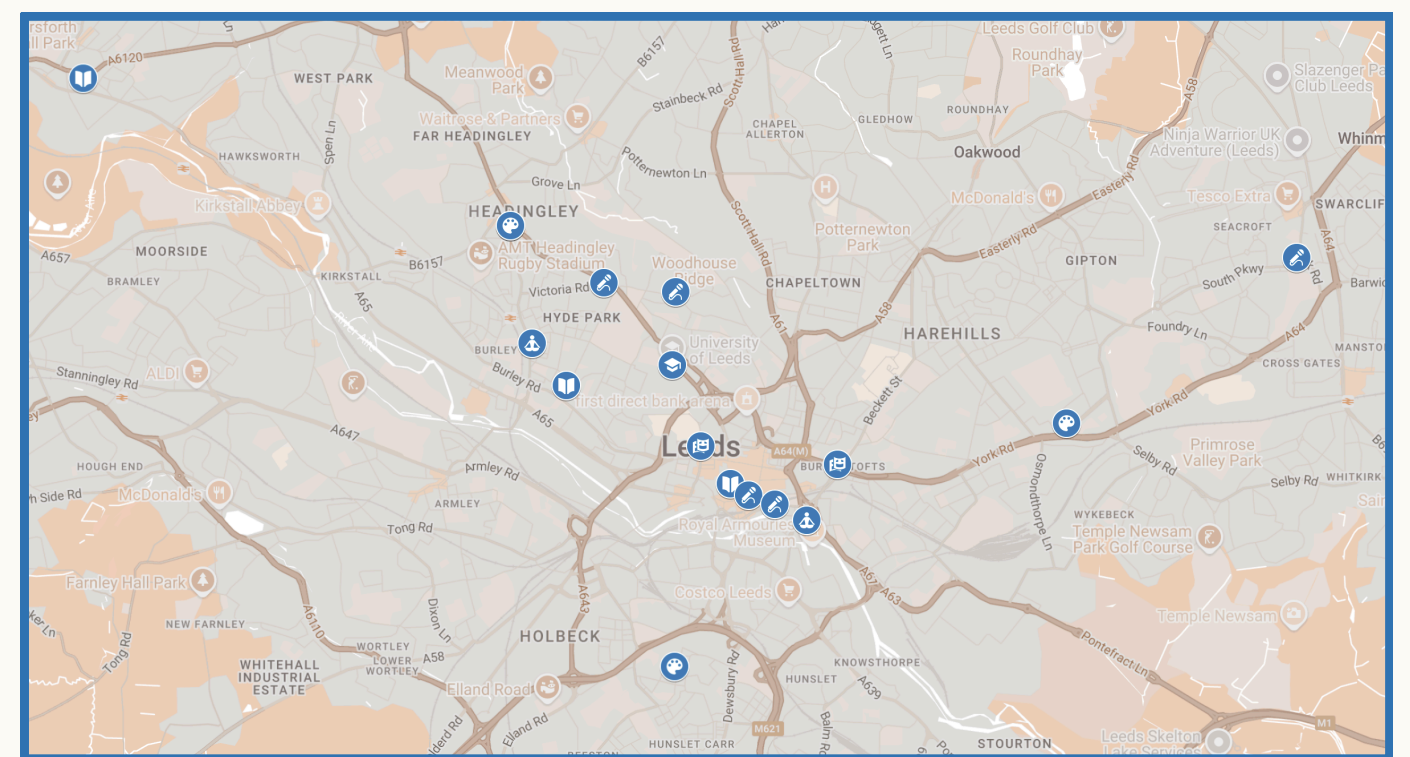
→ Conducting interviews

→ Event observation

→ Anthology analysis

→ Mapping networks

→ Analysis and outputs



04 Results

1) Connectivity

- Leeds poetry scene = fragmented but collaborative spirit growing.

2) Accessibility

- Physical barriers & digital gaps persist.
- Community orgs use poetry for wellbeing.

3) Genre & Diversity

- From performance poetry to literary presses – a wide stylistic range.
- Leeds distinct for grassroots rather than institutionalised poetry.

“Leeds has a unique, DIY poetry scene. – Ian Harker.”

“The scene is nothing without grassroots nights. – Matt Abbott.”

05 Analysis

- Leeds poetry thrives through community-driven practice, a focus on wellbeing and an overlap of genres.
- Barriers: fragmented communication, venue access, and limited recognition.
- NPC can strengthen networks and visibility by mediating between grassroots activity and institutional support

Inclusivity ↔ Visibility ↔ Collaboration ↔ Sustainability

“Sometimes poetry feels like shouting into the void. – Jaimes Moran.”

“We need a place that is the voice of the city. – Khadijah Ibrahim.”

06 Conclusion

This research has shown that Leeds' poetry scene is both distinctive and fragmented, shaped by grassroots energy and a focus on wellbeing, yet constrained by limited visibility and collaboration opportunities among underrepresented voices.

Engaging directly with 13 individuals, including poets, publishers, and community organisations, has illuminated the potential for stronger networks and greater inclusivity. By documenting voices often overlooked and mapping the city's literary landscape, this project contributes to the groundwork for a National Poetry Centre that is rooted in local realities while envisioning national impact.

