



## Equal Opportunities Policy

- Policy updated by Hannah Dunne 01 April 2022
- Next review date: 01 April 2023

### Summary Statement

HighTide's mission is to commission, develop and produce new writing in East Anglia and across the UK. We discover new talent, provide creative development opportunities for playwrights and other creatives, and stage high quality theatre productions both in our region and nationally. We enable new and underrepresented playwrights to express their visions of contemporary politics and society, demonstrate their potential, and in doing so we showcase the future of theatre.

HighTide commits to preventing discrimination and fostering equal opportunities. This Statement details that commitment and sets out what is acceptable and expected of all those who work for the company.

The Executive Team are responsible for promoting diversity and inclusivity within the organisation. It is the responsibility of all members of the workforce to ensure that at all times the policy of inclusion and openness is upheld within the organisation.

### Definition

The term "equal opportunities" upholds the idea that employees should be entitled to and have access to all the Company's facilities at every stage of employment, including the pre-employment phase.

This means every individual should have:

- An equal chance to apply and be selected for posts pre-employment
- An equal chance to be trained and promoted while employed with the organisation
- An equal chance to have their employment terminated equally and fairly.

### Working for us

HighTide is an equal opportunity employer. Denying any employee or prospective employee their right to equal opportunity in the workplace is tantamount to discrimination, which is considered unlawful under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

The Equality Act has specified 9 areas that are termed in the legislation as protected characteristics. These include (in no particular order):

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Race
4. Disability
5. Pregnancy
6. Marital status
7. Sexual orientation
8. Gender reassignment
9. Religious background

As someone working for us, you have a right to:

- Fair practices and behaviour in the workplace

- Fair and clear allocations of workloads
- Equal access to benefits and conditions
- Competitive merit-based selection processes for recruitment and promotion
- A workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or [bullying at work](#)
- Fair processes to deal with work-related complaints and grievances

If any of these rights are breached or your employment is terminated and you deem it as unfair dismissal (where eligibility criteria is met), an employment solicitor should be able to provide you with additional assistance.

### **Workforce Diversity**

HighTide recognises the need for equality in the culture of the United Kingdom and celebrates our cultural diversity as a source of creativity, fresh perspectives and renewal; we ensure that diversity is an integral part of our artistic and company process.

We will take positive action where required to actively encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds, so that staff will better represent the demography of the communities served.

HighTide is committed to providing equal opportunity in recruitment, promotion and training and development by ensuring that applicants for employment and candidates for transfer and promotion are considered on the basis of the relevant qualifications, skills, aptitudes and abilities they possess.

### **Creative Case**

HighTide wants to make a positive contribution towards the Creative Case for Diversity responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage and any social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts.

HighTide will continue to develop and programme diverse artists and will continue to work with a range of partners based on the belief that promoting a diverse working environment produces a creative dynamic that fuels innovation

We will foster relationships with practitioners who bring a range of methodologies and perspectives into the organisation.

### **Recruitment**

HighTide is committed to ensuring that recruitment procedures meet the following standards:

- HighTide will accept applications for all vacancies/roles from anyone and consider all those who meet the qualifying criteria.
- Applications from D/deaf or disabled persons are welcome. Selection process and accessibility of application materials are monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Interviews or employee selections are conducted by at least two people and will follow an assessment protocol based on questions and answers.
- Applicants will not be asked about their age, race, religion or any other protected characteristic.

### *Exemption*

*In line with industry practice, HighTide may discriminate lawfully in limited circumstances (for example for casting or health and safety reasons): where, having regard to the nature or context of the work or role, being of a particular sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age (or being a transsexual person, married or a civil partner) is an occupational requirement.*

### **Working Environment**

HighTide is committed to ensuring that our working environment meet the following standards:

- All similarly qualified employees will have equal access and opportunity to all training and advancement facilities regardless of sex, gender, age or disability.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made in the workplace to accommodate employees with physical or mental health conditions, diagnoses, or impairments.
- No protected characteristic will ever have a bearing on an employee's rate of pay
- The same rules apply to employees from all religions regarding extra time off during religious holidays.
- Any bullying or harassment in the workplace is totally unacceptable and subject to action (see the Companies' Anti-Harassment Policy).
- The Company follows to Industry Union's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. There is a documented Grievance Procedure which details how a complaint regarding discrimination, harassment or bullying can be made by one employee regarding another employee. Copies of both these procedures are available from the Executive Director.

HighTide has these standards in place to ensure that all employees are treated appropriately and fairly and that, all things being equal, no candidate is treated unfairly because of their age, gender, race, sexuality or any other protected characteristic.

### **Accessibility**

HighTide is committed to a celebration of equality in arts and culture in the United Kingdom, which we feel can only be fully realised if both the creative process and the product is equally accessible to anyone.

HighTide wants to remove barriers to participation and engagement so that we can promote and produce new voices, find new ways of accessible storytelling and work with partners who can help us grow our ability to reach and encourage new people to the arts and share good practice.

HighTide works throughout the year with a variety of different organisations around the country who present and programme the work HighTide has developed, which allows the company to increase and diversify our audience base and provide provision for patrons with disabilities.

HighTide has a pricing policy of maintaining accessible prices with concessionary rates as appropriate.

HighTide is committed to presenting work in rural Suffolk, where sections of the local demographic experience rural and urban socio-economic deprivation, as well as offering opportunities to young people in rural areas whom do not have the same access to the arts as young people in urban areas.

### **Audiences and Engagement**

HighTide is committed to an open, inclusive and democratic relationship with its audiences through all its engagement.

HighTide aspires to inspire and engage each community that we work in and develop and strengthen those links over time.

We will continue to programme work that challenges attitudes of our audience, seeking out work that presents different stories and narratives.

### **Governance**

HighTide works with its Board of Trustees to monitor equality across the organisation, programming and engagement. The Board is refreshed on a regular basis.

### **Stakeholders**

HighTide has a commitment to collaborative partnership and stakeholder relationships that diversify and enrich the organisation and the experience of our audiences.

We are supported by a diverse range of funders which enables a broad and collaborative programme of work. Our major stakeholder is Arts Council England.

**Policy in Action**

The full Equality Action Policy can be requested from the Executive Director. This policy supports HighTide's 5 year NPO business plan.