



# STRATEGIC EQUALITY POLICY 2024-27

**Policy Last Reviewed: July 2024**

**Next Review: July 2025**

**(or sooner in line with updated legislation)**

## Introduction

Hijinx are pioneers of inclusive theatre. Inclusive theatre, in this context, is defined as theatre where disabled and non-disabled people perform side by side as equal partners.

Hijinx is the only theatre company in Wales providing vocational training for learning disabled and/or autistic people. Hijinx is committed to changing attitudes towards disability and is acknowledged as a key player for championing the performance capabilities of learning disabled people nationally and internationally.

Our vision is **a world where the arts and society are fully inclusive for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.**

Our Strategic Equalities Plan is delivered through our mission to **pioneer, produce and promote professional and participatory opportunities in the arts and creative industries for learning disabled and/or autistic people.**

Hijinx is committed to creating equity of opportunity in our workplace and in all elements of our artistic practice.

Hijinx values are to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in everything it does and will actively seek to challenge discrimination and intolerance. All employees/freelancers will be treated fairly and with respect. Access to opportunities for promotion, training or any other benefits will also be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees/freelancers will be encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the creativity and success of the company.

This Strategic Equalities Action Plan is updated annually and aims to demonstrate our continuing commitment to integrate equality of opportunity as a guiding principle underpinning our work. We recognise our responsibilities within the Equality Act 2010 and our plan aims to ensure that no individual suffers discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Hijinx exists to improve equality and sustainability, delivering against the goals of the [Well-being and Future Generations Act](#).

## Our Approach

Our work always involves artists with learning disabilities and/or autism in its development and performance. This defines who we are, and everything we do is focused on creating a

safe environment that enables our community to excel. We are careful not to set our artists up to fail. Our strength is in our inclusive practice which allows artists with and without learning disabilities and/or autism to work side by side as equals throughout the creative process. Our commitment to equality, access and inclusion is fundamental to our work.

The more our work is seen the more we can change society's perception of disability. We tour regularly to European festivals and curate an exceptional inclusive and disability-led programme for the biennial Hijinx Unity Festival giving us global reach and impact. We will push this forward and explore new ways to share our work with audiences.

Diversity and Inclusion are core values at Hijinx, and we will continue to live and work by them. We are proud to have signed a pledge to Zero Racism with Race Council Cymru, and to be part of Diverse Cymru's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Cultural Competence Certification Scheme.

## A Note on Terminology

We subscribe to the social model of as opposed to a medical model. The social model says people are disabled by society, not by their impairments or conditions. We generally use the terms 'learning disabled and/or autistic people', but we respect other people's language choices.

When referring to our actors and participants we will use 'actors/participants with learning disabilities and/or autism', this has been developed in partnership with our artists to reflect their desire to be identified as an actor first.

When considering language, we are consistently listening to stakeholders to ensure our language is supportive – we will refer to organisations including Scope, Mencap and Learning Disability Wales to inform our thinking, as well as direct dialogue with our community.

We also recognise that terminology to do with race is changing and evolving, and that different individuals and communities will have different views and preference on terms.

We use the term people from the Global Majority.

We recognise that many people identify with multiple protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and we will take an intersectional approach, bearing in mind that people often face multiple and complex barriers to access the arts.

# Responsibilities

## Trustees

Trustees are responsible for setting the principles by which Hijinx Theatre will approach Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. They are also responsible for ensuring as far as possible that the principles are put in place across the organisation, by monitoring performance.

## Managers

Have specific responsibility in ensuring that all staff are aware of the principles detailed in this policy and behave accordingly. Managers are expected to intervene should they witness behaviour that does not comply with the principles detailed in the policy.

## All employees and freelancers

Creating an environment of respect and dignity requires all staff, the board and volunteers to fully observe and comply with the principles detailed in the policy. All employees and volunteers should also intervene should they become aware of behaviour that does not comply with the principles detailed in the policy.

All employees have a responsibility to all the individuals who we work with to ensure that as far as possible they experience an environment free from discrimination and in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect and provides with the resources and opportunities to reach equal outcomes.

## How to make a Complaint

Anyone concerned that there has been a breach of this policy should bring this to the attention of either the CEO or the Board of Trustees if the complaint is regarding the CEO. We would expect in most cases that once challenged unacceptable behaviour will stop. If however this is not the case then the complaints procedure should be followed. The complaints procedure mostly focuses on examples of bullying and harassment (and is also in our Dignity at Work Policy) but it also applies to any form of discrimination. If any employee feels that the spirit of this policy is not being met, they should consider using this complaints procedure. It is only through challenging unacceptable behaviour that we will achieve the values that we seek to attain through this policy.

## Informal Procedure

In some instances the recipient of harassment / bullying or discrimination (the person whose rights under this policy may have been breached) will just want it to stop. In any specific case where warranted, the alleged offending person should be advised, either verbally or in writing, that the alleged behaviour is not acceptable. Either way, this should be recorded as soon as it has been shared with management and/or the Board. The complainant may feel able to do this themselves or they may want someone to accompany them, or even to approach the alleged offending person on their behalf. If any individual does not feel that this policy is being upheld they can either make a formal complaint or raise the matter with their

manager who may be able to resolve the issue. If this complaint is about the CEO then this should be communicated directly to the board.

### Formal Procedure

A formal complaint from an employee should be made in writing and submitted to the CEO or the Board of Trustees if the complaint is regarding the CEO. The Grievance Procedure forms the basis for the formal procedure. The person making the complaint will be informed as to what action is being taken and informed when an investigation is complete.

At any time during the procedure any discussion will be confidential and no action will normally be taken without the consent of the person making the complaint. The only exception to this is where a Trustee or Manager considers the incident to be so serious that immediate action should be taken, in which case the person concerned will be informed that this action is to be taken.

Both the complainant and the alleged offending person have the right to be accompanied by either a work colleague or trade union representative at any stage of the procedure.

If it is necessary for the alleged offending person and complainant to be separated during any procedure then, unless the complainant requests otherwise, unless circumstances require otherwise it should be the alleged offending person who is moved.

If it is necessary to suspend an employee at any time due to an alleged incident of harassment / bullying or discrimination then the suspension will be on full pay and the procedure does not constitute part of any subsequent disciplinary procedure.

### Keeping a Record

It is important that anyone who believes that they have suffered from a breach of this policy should keep notes of the details, outlined below, for each incident and that they are made as soon after the event as possible. Detailed notes should include the following:

- Date;
- Time;
- Place;
- Name of Person involved;
- What is alleged to have happened;
- How the complainant actually felt at the time;
- Name(s) of any witness(es);
- Action taken and whether reported to Management and if not why not;
- Any correspondence relating to the incidents and subsequent complaints.

There may be an occasion when it is appropriate for an employee to be counselled without recourse to the disciplinary procedure. Where after counselling, improvement does not take place or the matter is of a more serious nature, then the appropriate formal disciplinary process may be implemented.

## The Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act (2010) created nine protected characteristics namely, Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnerships, Maternity and Pregnancy, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. The following section provides some information on each of these statutory characteristics and sets out the action that we are endeavouring to take to ensure that we do not discriminate against anyone of a protected characteristic or a combination of protected characteristics.

### Age

**We value the contributions of employees of all ages and will not discriminate on the basis of age.**

The Act defines age by reference to a person's age or age group.

An age group can:

- mean people of the same age or a range of ages
- be wide such as 'people under 50'
- be narrow such as 'people in their mid-50s' or people born in a particular year
- be relative, such as 'older than me' or 'older than us'
- be linked to actual or assumed physical appearance which may bear little relation to chronological age such as 'the grey workforce'.

A person could therefore belong to various age groups: a 19 year old could, for example, belong to groups that include 'young adults', 'teenagers', 'under 50s', 'under 25s' or '19 year olds'.

### Disability

**We will seek to ensure that employees or prospective employees are not discriminated against under the terms of this policy and the act and will take advantage of schemes and reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with disabilities, (including those who are 'associated') with people with a disability are able to play a full role in the company.**

A person is a disabled person if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

In relation to physical impairment the following are examples:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.
- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis.
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met (see below).
- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.
- Mental impairment/neurodivergence includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

The other tests to apply to decide if someone has the protected characteristic of disability are:

- The length the effect of the condition has lasted or will continue: it must be long term. 'Long term' means that an impairment is likely to last for the rest of the person's life, or has lasted at least 12 months or where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months. If the person no longer has the condition but it is likely to recur or if the person no longer has the condition, they will be considered to be a disabled person.
- Whether the effect of the impairment is to make it more difficult and/or time-consuming for a person to carry out an activity compared to someone who does not have the impairment, and this causes more than minor or trivial inconvenience.
- If the activities that are made more difficult are 'normal day-to-day activities' at work or at home.

Whether the condition has this impact without taking into account the effect of any medication the person is taking or any aids or assistance or adaptations they have, like a wheelchair, walking stick, assistance dog or special software on their computer. The exception to this is the wearing of glasses or contact lenses where it is the effect while the person is wearing the glasses or contact lenses, which is taken into account.

Progressive conditions and those with fluctuating or recurring effects are included, such as depression, provided they meet the test of having a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The protection also applies to anyone who is associated with someone with a disability, such as a child or elderly relative.

## Gender reassignment and Transgender

**We will seek to eliminate discrimination against Transgender employees, freelancers or volunteers or those who have undergone (or are undergoing) gender reassignment to create a positive working environment for all staff.**

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

A person will be protected from discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention to undergo gender reassignment known to a manager or the CEO:
- once they have so proposed to undergo gender reassignment they are protected, even if they take no further steps or they decide to stop later on
- they do not have to have reached an irrevocable decision that they will undergo gender reassignment, but as soon as there is a manifestation of this intention they are protected
- start or continue to dress, behave or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person
- undergo treatment related to gender reassignment, such as surgery or hormone therapy, or
- have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

It does not matter which of these applies to a person for them to be protected because of the characteristic of gender reassignment.

## Marriage and civil partnership

**We welcome and celebrate employees no matter what their marital or civil partnership status is.**



A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

**We will do everything we can to ensure that any employee or prospective employee does not suffer any discrimination because of their pregnancy, whilst on maternity leave or on their return to work.**

**Managers are specifically responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken and that employees on maternity leave are kept up to date with developments in their area of work.**

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic for the period up to the day the employee returns to work.

### **Race**

**We celebrate and value the diversity and richness brought by employees of all national, ethnic and cultural groups. We abhor racism and will not tolerate it. We will also strive to ensure that we promote harmony between different groups.**

Hijinx Theatre recognises that race is a social construct, however it is used to refer to a person's:

- Skin colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin

A racial group is composed of people who have or share a skin colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin.

A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'.

Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

### **Religion or belief**

**We welcome any employee to celebrate their religion or belief in a meaningful way. We will consider any reasonable request from an employee that will facilitate their religion or belief and will strive as far as possible to accommodate them.**

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

A religion need not be mainstream or well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within religions may be considered a religion. Cults and new religious movements may also be considered religions or beliefs.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.

‘Religious belief’ goes beyond beliefs about and adherence to a religion or its central articles of faith and may vary from person to person within the same religion.

A belief which is not a religious belief may be a philosophical belief, such as humanism or atheism.

A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world.

For a belief to be protected by the Equality Act:

- It must be genuinely held.
- It must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on information available at the moment.
- It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.
- It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance.
- It must be worthy of respect in a democratic society.
- It must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

## Sex

**We celebrate all the unique skills that men, women and non-binary people bring. It is an essential element of this policy that everyone is able to fully contribute to the company and are free from any bias or harassment based on their gender.**

A person’s sex refers to the fact that they are male, female or non-binary either through birth, gender reassignment or by self defining.

## Sexual orientation

**We welcome and celebrate employees regardless of their sexual orientation.** Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to.

- Some people are only attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men).
- Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people).
- Some people are only attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people).

Everyone is protected from being discriminated against because of sexual orientation, whether they are bisexual, pansexual, gay, lesbian, queer or heterosexual or any other denominations.

Sexual orientation discrimination also covers prejudice connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.

## Equal Pay

**We will strive to ensure that our pay and remuneration system is free of any bias.**

It is illegal to discriminate between men and women in pay and other terms and conditions of their contract of employment, such as bonus payments, holidays, sick pay etc.

We will strive to maintain and regularly review our pay and remuneration system to ensure as far as possible that it continues to meet its obligations under the law.

## Types of Discrimination

**Direct discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably, on the grounds of their sex, gender identity, race, disability, age, employment status or religious opinion or belief.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied equally to both men and women; disabled persons or persons from a particular race but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of the one group which can comply with it is much smaller than the proportion of the other group.

**Discrimination by Association** occurs when an employee is treated less favourably because they are associated with another person who possesses a certain protected characteristic (of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex or sexual orientation).

**Discrimination by Perception** occurs when an employee is treated less favourably because they are perceived by others to possess a certain protected characteristic (of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex or sexual orientation).

## Victimisation

This occurs when a person is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he or she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance or because he or she is suspected of doing so or being about to do so.

### **Harassment/Third Party Harassment**

For the purpose of this Policy, harassment is regarded by the Company as repeated unwelcome looks, comments, actions, suggestions or physical contact that is considered objectionable and offensive to an individual or group of employees and which might threaten an employee's job security or create an intimidating working environment.

## **Specific areas**

### **Meeting individual needs**

We will make all reasonable efforts to meet the particular needs of any individual and not place unreasonable constraints upon them. For example:

- Caring and domestic responsibilities – time off may be appropriate to allow staff to care for children or sick relatives to help them balance their work and home responsibilities (see our flexible working policy)
- Working Patterns – wherever possible training courses and meetings should be planned to allow attendance by part time staff
- Disability – staff with a disability should be consulted about any reasonable adjustments which could be made to allow them to better perform their roles
- Religious practices – it may be necessary to provide special regard to requests for the timing of annual leave and for special or extended leave or for changes in normal hours of working to meet religious or cultural needs of employees.
- Staff experiencing menopause or perimenopause.

### **Recruitment**

Individuals involved in the recruitment and selection process will strive to ensure that our recruitment and selection policy and procedures are adhered to and that:

- Job descriptions and person specifications only include criteria which are objectively required for the duties and responsibilities of the position
- Job advertisements are circulated to encourage applications from all sections of the community and will take care to ensure that the methods used do not unreasonably or unfairly restrict the pool of likely candidates.
- If there is a genuine and lawful reason for limiting the vacancy to a particular group, this will be clearly stated and the grounds for it on any advertisement
- Short-listing is based on objective criteria relevant to the position and free from bias
- Selection decisions are made by suitability trained staff, purely on the grounds of the candidate's abilities and reasons for decisions recorded.
- No health-related questions are asked unless 'intrinsic' to the position

We will consider appropriate positive action strategies to ensure a workforce that reasonably reflects the communities in which we operate.

### **Training and Development**

We will strive to ensure that all staff are given appropriate opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. Training and development will be regularly monitored to ensure that the system and opportunities are free from discrimination, and accessible to all suitably qualified and or experienced employees. We will not expect members of staff or volunteers to attend training that they already have lived experience of as we recognise that this can be a traumatising experience.

### **Career Development**

We will strive to ensure that within reason all career opportunities are made available to all suitably qualified and/or experienced staff and also consider how best to help staff progress their careers, taking into account their lack of opportunity due to discrimination and the additional resources they may need to be able to achieve equal outcomes to others. As far as the law allows we will consider taking reasonable positive action to improve the status of any underrepresented groups in the company. For example, if two candidates for a job are tied equally we will consider appointing the person from an under-represented group.

### **Pay and Remuneration**

We will strive to ensure that our pay and remuneration system is free from bias and appropriate to the needs of Hijinx Theatre. The Pay system will remain transparent and easy to understand.

### **Reviewing and Monitoring**

All employees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their gender, race, ethnic origin and any disabilities. The Company guarantees that this form will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy.

The Company is also committed to reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of this Policy in line with changes in legislation and other good practice guidelines.

This policy is accompanied by an **Action Plan** which is reviewed and monitored by the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis.

For further information regarding this Policy, contact Hijinx Theatre's Board of Trustees.

### **Links with other policies.**

Further related information is also in the following policies and procedures;  
Dignity at Work policy which includes information on Bullying and Harassment.  
Recruitment practices and procedures  
Flexible Working

Grievance Policy

Menopause & Perimenopause Policy (in development)

Equalities Action Plan (see below)

This policy is subject to regular monitoring of data on six of the protected characteristics.

Age, Disability, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

# STRATEGIC EQUALITIES

## ACTION PLAN 2024-2027

### Aims

In this 2024-27 plan our focus is 4 key aims:

1. Ensure our board, staff, volunteers and freelancers better reflect the diversity of Wales and our communities;
2. Increase the racial diversity of our artists;
3. Lobby for change in the benefits system;
4. Champion positive change in the arts and creative industries;

### Aim 1 - Ensure our board, staff, volunteers and freelancers better reflect the diversity of Wales and our communities

We recognise the need for our staff team, board of trustees and wider Hijinx family to reflect the diversity of Wales and our communities.

- Currently Hijinx has an employed staff team of 21, 57% women and 43% men, all staff are white and 10% identify as disabled.
- 40% of the staff team can read simple sentences on everyday topics and speak 'a little Welsh', and two are fluent Welsh speakers. The remainder are Welsh learners.
- Our board of trustees is well balanced in terms of gender (50% women and 50% men). 15.38% of trustees identify as being from the Global Majority, the remainder are white. 8% of trustees are Welsh speakers and an additional 10% can speak, read and understand simple sentences on everyday topics in Welsh. Currently, one of our Trustees identifies as Disabled.

We gather monitoring data for our staff, board, volunteers and freelancers annually to help us measure our progress. We also track this information in relation to recruitment and freelance contracts.

### Achievements against Aim 1:

#### Recruitment

In Spring 2021, we appointed an HR Consultant and have reviewed our staff recruitment policies and procedures. Changes that have been made include:

- anonymised applications,
- longer application windows,
- changing where vacancies are listed and advertised,
- advertising salaries on all staff roles,

- GIS scheme for disabled and global majority candidates,
- questions provided in advance of interviews.

### **Leadership and Oversight**

To prioritise this work, we have set up an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sub-group of trustees and staff to drive this work forward, scrutinise our policies and decision making and hold the management and board of trustees to account. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is a standing agenda item at board meetings.

### **Cultural Competence Scheme & Training**

Hijinx signed up to Diverse Cymru's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Cultural Competence Certification Scheme and staff and trustees have completed initial cultural competency training. This follows on from Know Your Bias and Allyship in the Workplace from The Other Box and First Steps to LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training delivered by Stonewall Cymru.

### **The Panel & Pawb Connect**

To ensure a diversity of voices at every level, we have created a steering group of artists with learning disabilities and/or autism to provide a direct voice into our artistic and management decisions. They meet on a monthly basis.

### **Benchmarking of Freelance Team**

Gathering monitoring data about freelancers so we can proactively identify gaps in representation and seek to fill them.

Please see proposed objectives and actions for 2024-27 in the table below (page 19).

## **Aim 2 - Increase the racial diversity of our artists**

In a small organisation everyone must be extraordinary - staff and trustees as well as freelance facilitators and artists. At Hijinx they all are. It is a team that buzzes with ideas and the courage to carry them through, reflect on them, abandon and restart. That said, if we want to engage more people and reach underrepresented communities, we must ensure that we reflect those people in the work we create and present, both on stage/screen and behind the scenes. We must increase the racial diversity of artists, both disabled and non-disabled, that we work with to bring a wider and richer range of experiences and perspective to our work.

All our work follows the rule "nothing about us without us". The starting point for creation comes from our artists with a learning disability and/or autism, who are involved at each stage of project development, shaping the stories they perform on our stages and screen. It is this tenant and way of working that ensures our work is genuine and honest, it never takes advantage or misrepresents, it is solely representative of the individuals we have in the room. They own the work.

To reflect a more diverse range of experiences and cultures in our work, it is vital that we increase the number of global majority artists with a learning disability and/or autism we are training through our Academies, something we have had limited success with so far.



## Achievements against Aim 2:

### **Neurodiversity & Anti-Racism in Welsh Arts (NAWA)**

We received funding from the Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Culture Heritage and Sport Fund for a partnership project with Hijinx Theatre, Learning Disability Wales & Disability Arts Cymru to address issues faced by learning disabled and neurodivergent people from global majority communities when accessing or engaging in arts and culture. We appointed a project lead, Sarah Asante-Gregory to coordinate the programme.

### **Development of Anti-Racism Training for Learning Disabled and Neurodivergent Audiences**

Currently, no anti-racism training exists that is suitable or appropriate for learning disabled and neurodivergent audiences. We will be developing a bespoke training programme for our Academy actors that can be rolled out across Wales.

### **Creative Enabler Training**

We were successful in our application to the Creative Skills fund for funding to develop a training programme for Creative Enablers. Creative Enablers (CE) are trained, creative professionals who accompany people with learning disabilities and/or autism (LD/A) and disabled creative professionals in rehearsals, on set and during performances. They support both the individual and the production; facilitating effective communication and approaches, and ensuring support needs are met. They are currently a non-regulated workforce and no established training for this role exists.

### **Cultural Competence Scheme**

Hijinx signed up to Diverse Cymru's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Cultural Competence Certification Scheme and staff and trustees have completed initial cultural competency training. This follows on from Know Your Bias and Allyship in the Workplace from The Other Box and First Steps to LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training delivered by Stonewall Cymru.

**Please see proposed objectives and actions for 2024-27 in the table below (page 19).**

## **Aim 3 - Lobby for change in the benefits system and better support for learning disabled people working in the creative industries**

The current distribution of welfare benefits actively discourages learning disabled people to access paid work.

Recent experience of actors who have successfully secured roles in external productions has shown us how difficult and frustrating the current systems are, and the culture of fear and anxiety they create. We are in conversation with Equity, HMRC and other industry representatives to lobby for change, share case studies, and look at specific examples to identify options for our actors, that we hope will have wider impact.

We will continue to support and signpost our actors and their families to advice and information to help them to make informed decisions around pay and work.

We are awaiting clarity on the next stages for Universal Credit roll out and how that might impact the people that we work with.

### **Achievements against Aim 3:**

#### **Professional Development for Academy Members**

Hijinx Theatre has delivered a professional development module for all Academy members to equip them and their support networks with key skills to enter employment in the sector. Other training options are being explored.

#### **Advice & Support for Artists**

Hijinx Theatre supported 12 artists to register for self-employment and complete their Tax Return with HMRC, creating resources to explain and simplify the process. These resources can be used to support further artists and help remove barriers.

#### **Creative Enabler Training**

As above, we were successful in our application to the Creative Skills fund for funding to develop a training programme for Creative Enablers. Through training more Creative Enablers, we can support more artists who are learning disabled and/or autistic into work.

Please see proposed objectives and actions for 2024-27 in the table below (page 19).

## **Aim 4 - Champion positive change in the arts and creative industries**

Hijinx is a forceful champion for change in the creative industries. Our collaborative model of working is mutually beneficial, creating incredible, bold work. It gives organisations and individuals the chance to build an understanding of how to work inclusively, and the skills to do so.

Disabled people remain underrepresented on stage and screen and all our work aims to address this imbalance.

### **Achievements against Aim 4:**

#### **ReFocus**

ReFocus is communications training for the screen industries. It is designed to help anyone working in the screen sector, in any department, make their working practice more inclusive of learning disabled and/or autistic people. The one-day course is certified by the CPD

Certification Service. Thanks to funding from Creative Wales, it was delivered at a discounted or free rate until the end of March 2024.

### **Hijinx Actors Agency**

In Casting, we will continue to work with the sector to develop accessible and inclusive pathways for our artists to audition for roles. We aim to deliver training for casting directors and production companies to share our experience in how to audition and attract talent from the LD/A community. We will run training sessions for the families of our artists to help them best support their Hijinx actor.

### **Housemates**

A theatre piece in partnership with Sherman Theatre. Performed by a cast of neurodivergent and neurotypical actor-musicians, Housemates packs a punch and touches the heart.

Here is the summary: "In the 1970s, just a few metres from the Sherman's doors, a revolution started. It was a revolution that rocked the world.

It began when Alan, a young man born with Down's syndrome, crashed into the life of Cardiff University student Jim. Alan had lived as a resident in Ely Hospital since childhood; all he wanted was to live in a house and be in a band. Jim wanted to make a difference in the world, but didn't know how. Together with their friends, they embarked on an experiment that transformed how things were done, how people were treated and who got to tell you how to live. This was the beginning of the end of institutionalized care and the birth of Supported Living."

Housemates premiered at Sherman Theatre in October 2023 and will be embarking on a national tour in Spring 2025.

### **Lost & Found**

We developed a GWR Community Fund-funded short documentary about Chris and his adoption story. The film showcases Chris' moving journey and his relationships with friends and family. The intention is to further promote *Lost & Found* so more people can experience this moving story.

### **Vaguely Artistic**

Vaguely Artistic is Hijinx's in-house inclusive punk, rock, pop, soul, blues and funk band. They have released their debut album 'Vaguely Accomplished' and are regular performers across Cardiff.

Please see proposed objectives and actions for 2024-27 in the table below (page 19).

## Strategic Equality Plan

ACTION	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	PROGRESS
<b>Ensure our board, staff, volunteers and freelancers better reflect the diversity of Wales and the communities we work with</b>			
Establish Equality, Diversity & Inclusion sub-group of trustees and staff.	CEO/ Trustees	Ongoing	Group setup
Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring for all staff and trustees	CEO/ Trustees	Complete	Updated annually
Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring for volunteers, freelancers and participants	CEO/ Managers	Complete	Updated annually
Develop board of trustees to better reflect the diversity of Wales	CEO/ Trustees	Ongoing	3 new board members recruited – further changes needed
Develop staff to better reflect the diversity of Wales by updating recruitment policies and procedures to ensure inclusive approach	CEO	Complete	Process reviewed regularly
Ensure all staff and trustees undergo Unconscious Bias and Anti-Racism training	CEO	Ongoing	Initial training completed, next phase planned
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to be a standing item at board meetings	CEO/ Trustees	Complete	Fully implemented
Create a steering group of artists with a learning disability and/or autism	CEO/AD	Complete	The Panel and PAWB Connect established April 2021 and meetings take place monthly
Achieve Cultural Competence Certification with Diverse Cymru	All	March 2025	First workbook due in August 2024
<b>Increase the racial diversity of the artists we work with</b>			
Achieve Cultural Competence Certification with Diverse Cymru	All	March 2025	First workbook due in August 2024
Build the profile of Hijinx to attract broader range of participants and artists	Marketing Manager	Ongoing	Marketing Manager recruited – strategy to be completed by December 2024
Delivery of Neurodiversity & Anti-Racism in Welsh Arts (NAWA) project	Project Lead	December 2024	Ongoing

Consider legacy of NAWA activity and how this feeds into the organisation long-term	CEO & NAWA Project Lead	March 2025	Not started
Develop training programme for Creative Enablers	Access Lead	March 2026	Ongoing
Finalise and roll out anti-racism training for learning disabled and neurodivergent people	NAWA Project Lead & Academy Director	March 2025	Ongoing
<b>Lobby for change in the benefits system.</b>			
Recruit and train more Creative Enablers to support learning disabled and/or autistic artists into work	CEO, Academy Director & Access Lead	March 2026	Ongoing
Research and engage with other support mechanisms e.g. Access to Work and Direct Payments, to secure appropriate support for working artists.	Jobs	Ongoing	Not Started
Embed Access Lead role to improve access support for learning disabled artists	Jobs	March 2025	Ongoing
<b>Champion positive change in the arts and creative industries</b>			
Establish Drama Foundations in North Wales to broaden our reach and engage with participants in the North.	Head of PAWB/ Academy Director	March 2026	Research phase complete – group not yet started
<i>Meet Fred</i> remount in South Korea with the Wooran Foundation	Theatre	Autumn 2024	Ongoing
Better promote our theatre and film to gain recognition within the national and international arts sector and build new audiences for our work.	Film / Theatre / Marketing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Continued promotion of <i>Lost &amp; Found</i> to film festivals	Film/ Marketing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Continued development of <i>Two Worlds</i> - our first feature film with a LD/A cast	Film	Ongoing	In development. Initial funding secured, and further funding sources identified
National tour of <i>Housemates</i> in Spring 2025 in partnership with Sherman Cymru	Theatre	Spring 2025	Not Started
1% Promise - we promise to allocate 1% of our annual budget to actions that increase diversity within the organisation, making it an active part of our business decisions.	CEO / All	Ongoing	Tracking in place to monitor spend on equity, diversity and inclusion

*Staff report the progress of the Strategic Equality Plan to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis. We may need to change our actions during the life of the plan and identify, if necessary, where more work needs to be done.*