



**ACCELERATE: 35+ WRITERS GROUP**  
**WRITER CALL OUT**

**Accelerate** is Box of Tricks' new development programme for Northern playwrights over 35. Sparked by conversations we've had with writers in our PlayMakers Network, **Accelerate** celebrates the value of lived experience and recognises that writers can "emerge" at any stage in life. It is designed to help playwrights develop a brand-new play and make a step up in both their craft and professional writing careers.

We are looking for **12 writers to join the 9-month programme**, which will run from **January 2024 to September 2024**. Each writer will be invited to develop the first draft of a new play with support from Box of Tricks, as well as attending **monthly group sessions**. These sessions will include:

- ✦ **Craft workshops** led by Box of Tricks' Joint Artistic Director, Hannah Tyrrell Pinder. The content of which will be set in conversation with the group, tailored to their needs and areas of interest (for example, writing adaptations, solo shows, redrafting.)
- ✦ **Q and As with industry guests**, designed to provide clear insight and guidance on navigating the current new writing landscape. Example sessions might include pitching for radio drama, finding an agent, what to do when you're *not* writing.
- ✦ **Open sessions** - with busy working lives and multiple commitments, we recognise that finding time to write is half the battle. These sessions will be dedicated to writing together, starting with group check ins and goal setting. They will be a chance for the writers to share ideas and feedback in a relaxed setting, supported by the Box of Tricks team.
- ✦ **A group theatre trip** and pre-show discussion.

**Positive Action**

Box of Tricks' work is enriched by a diversity of voices and a variety of stories. As part of our [Positive Action](#) programme, we actively welcome applications from communities currently underrepresented on stage:

- *D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent writers*
- *LGBTQ+ writers*
- *Writers of colour*
- *First generation migrant writers*
- *Writers from a low socioeconomic background*

**ELIGIBILITY:**

To be eligible, writers must be:

- ✦ At least 35 years old. There is no upper age limit.
- ✦ Committed to developing as a playwright.
- ✦ Based in the North of England (sessions will be held in person in Manchester.)
- ✦ A member of our [PlayMakers Network](#).

## **HOW TO APPLY:**

To apply, first read the FAQs below then apply via our [Application Form](#) with the following details:

- Confirmation of your eligibility.
- A personal statement explaining why you want to take part in the programme (max 200 words).
- A 10-page sample of writing for stage, attached in Word (.doc/.docx) or PDF format.

[Apply Now](#)

**Applications open on 6 November. The deadline for submissions is 12pm on 27 November.**

We will also accept personal statements in **video or voice note format** (files accepted: mp3, wav, aiff, mp4, wma, wmv, mpg, flv, avi, mov – maximum 50mb).

If you have any questions whatsoever, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our Literary Team. Drop us a line at [playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk](mailto:playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk).

## **ACCELERATE - FAQs**

### **What happens after I apply?**

The deadline for applications is 12pm on **27/11/2023**. After this date, applications will be read by the Box of Tricks Literary Team (Adam Quayle, Hannah Tyrrell-Pinder, Conway McDermott, Karla Marie Sweet, Paddy Hughes and Billie Collins.) When selecting the 12 writers, we will consider the strength of the writing sample and accompanying statement, as well as the balance of experience, style, and voices in the overall cohort. We will inform all applicants of the outcome of their application **on or before 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023**.

The first Accelerate session will then be held in January 2024. The cohort will be announced publicly in early February 2024.

### **Why over 35?**

UK theatre has an ageism problem. Many writer development schemes are age-restricted, targeting young people, and show little recognition of the specific barriers (e.g., additional financial/caring responsibilities) that make such opportunities inaccessible to older writers. We have reviewed our own inclusion and diversity data, and found there is a real drop off in terms of our engagement with writers beyond 35 years old.

### **How much experience do I need?**

*Accelerate* is not an 'introduction to playwriting' course – so if you have never written a play before, the programme is not for you. It is designed for writers who are looking to make a step up in their creative practice. You do not need to have any professionally produced credits or formal training, but you should have experience of writing for stage, and a good understanding of core concepts of character, structure, dialogue and so on.

### **What should I send as a script sample?**

Your writing sample should be a maximum of 10 pages of script written for **stage** (i.e., not for film, TV or radio.) It may be a standalone piece or an extract from a longer work. It should be a single extract (i.e., not 10 pages of excerpts from multiple pieces.) It should be a sample that you feel best reflects your voice and ability as a playwright.

### **I am interested in writing for TV/radio/film – is this the programme for me?**

The main focus of *Accelerate* is writing for stage, and we are looking for writers who are committed to continuing to learn and develop as playwrights. However, we recognise that it's necessary for writers to write across multiple media to make a living, and depending on the cohort's interests, the programme may cover writing for screen and audio.

However, if you have *no* interest in writing for stage, or if you solely write prose or poetry, this is not the programme for you.

**When will the group sessions be?**

The workshops will take place once a month, likely in the evening. The timing of each session will be flexible, set in accordance with the availability of the group. Each session will be 2 hours long.

**What if I can't attend in person?**

The group workshops will take place at the Box of Tricks office at the Yard in Manchester – writers will be expected to make their own way to and from the sessions. To foster a sense of community in the cohort, participants will ideally attend as many sessions in person as possible. However, we recognise that other commitments or circumstances (e.g., work, childcare, access needs) might mean that in person attendance is not always possible. In these instances, attendance will be possible via Zoom.

**Will you cover my travel/childcare expenses?**

If needed, we will cover any reasonable travel/childcare expenses to allow you to access the programme.

**Will you produce my play?**

Should they want it, Box of Tricks will give each writer 1 to 1 support to write the first draft of a new play throughout the Accelerate programme. We will also provide guidance and advice on how to use this play as a calling card script. Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to produce the 12 new plays written during the programme. Accelerate is more focused on process and practice than result – but, given that this is not a commission opportunity, there is no pressure or expectation for each participant to produce a full play.

**I'm currently on another Box of Tricks scheme (e.g., Pen Pals, PlayBox) – can I still apply?**

Yes – so long as you meet the eligibility criteria!

**Due to a sensory impairment I can't complete the online application form. Is there another way for me to apply?**

Yes! We welcome applications in any format that works for you. Just drop us an email at

[playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk](mailto:playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk) and we can discuss your access requirements and find the best mode of submission for you and your work.

**I have specific access needs. Will these be accommodated if I am selected as one of the writers?**

The Accelerate programme will be as accessible as possible. We will ask the writers to complete an access rider ahead of the programme and will endeavour to ensure any access needs are met throughout the programme.

**What counts as the North?**

We ask that writers are based in the North so that they can attend in person sessions in Manchester. We are defining “Northern writer” as someone based in one of the following counties: Cheshire, Cumbria, County Durham, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumberland, North and East Lincolnshire, Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear, Yorkshire.

**I have another question that you haven't answered here.**

Please do send it on to [playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk](mailto:playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk) and we'll get back to you ASAP.