

10 Principles for Safe and Inclusive Workspaces

Bullying, harassment and discrimination have no place in our industry. These principles aim to eradicate such abuse and all forms of discrimination. They can also help employers meet legal requirements and offer a shared vision to promote and maintain a safer, more inclusive workplace environment for everyone working within theatre and performing arts.

All employers, employees, workers, trainees, volunteers, trustees, directors and freelancers should adhere to the following principles.

Where we use the term 'discrimination', this is in reference to any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Discrimination against any of these characteristics is unethical and illegal.

- 1 Everyone is responsible for creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace that is positive and supportive.
- 2 We recognise that harassment or discriminatory language or behaviour may be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3 We will explicitly address and seek to prevent racism and all other forms of discrimination and bias, their manifestations and effects.
- 4 Those of us who are employers accept our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 5 We do not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination on any grounds, and will ensure that processes are in place for the reporting and investigation of these serious issues.
- 6 We recognise that bullying, harassment and discrimination can have significant adverse impacts on the productivity, long-term physical and mental health and well-being of affected people and we will work to eradicate it. This will mean providing adequate protection for complainants and victims, and, where bullying, harassment or discrimination is found to have occurred, taking appropriate action against the perpetrators.
- 7 We value inclusivity, appreciate difference, encourage self-education and consider people equal without prejudice or favour. We build relationships based on mutual respect. We will all work to give and receive feedback in a constructive way, which we know will improve creativity and productivity.
- 8 We understand that reporting bullying, harassment or discrimination can be intimidating. If anyone comes forward to report any of this behaviour we will endeavour to make the process of reporting clear and straightforward, investigate objectively and respect confidentiality where possible. Individuals who have made

complaints or participate in good faith in any investigation into bullying, harassment, or discrimination should not suffer any form of reprisal or victimisation as a result.

- 9 We will respect each other's dignity and differences, regardless of the seniority of our role in an organisation.
- 10 As we continually work to better understand, develop and deliver this work, those of us who are employers commit to paying professionals with lived experience and/or specialist knowledge in these areas to advise us.

SOLT and UK Theatre expect all theatre organisations to abide by these principles, display them in their workplaces, communicate them to all staff and visitors, undertake training for all contracted staff to ensure everyone understands the meaning behind them and put in place robust procedures to deal with breaches of the principles.

Notes to the principles

This set of principles has been adapted from those of the [BFI](#). The BFI worked in partnership with BAFTA and with the input of leading screen sector industry organisations and Challenge Consultants (specialists in equality, diversity and inclusion training and policy development). The BFI principles were also produced in accordance with advice recommended by workplace experts, Acas.

These principles were originally adapted from the BFI's [Set of Principles](#) in 2017, subsequently [updated in 2021](#), and SOLT/UK Theatre have also updated them in 2021.

What are the principles?

These principles are part of SOLT and UK Theatre's wider work around bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Above all, they intend to set the tone of behaviour that is essential in the theatre industry, and they define and aim to prevent behaviour that may cause harm or detriment to individuals. They will also help ensure that issues don't escalate to more serious incidents.

By outlining specific boundaries of appropriate behaviour, we intend to help organisations, employers, employees, workers, freelancers, volunteers, directors and trustees to create a positive tone and culture.

Why are the principles important?

Understanding what constitutes unacceptable behaviour is an important step in establishing an inclusive culture for all aspects of the theatre industry. Prevention of this behaviour helps to mitigate the significant impacts on productivity, long-term physical and mental health and well-being of affected people and allows for the appropriate support to be provided. The high proportion of freelance and casual workers in the theatre industry makes it especially important to ensure that they are covered by these principles. Everyone working for a company or an organisation, on a project or production, should be fully aware of the expectations that relate to acceptable behaviour and recognise that the manner in which they perform their role is just as important to ensuring success as technical competence or creative ability.

Commitment from industry leaders

It is essential to have a genuine commitment from senior leaders across the theatre industry to help create an inclusive culture. Visible endorsement of these principles indicates that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not accepted, and open a supportive environment for those struggling with mental health issues. We encourage all employers to actively promote the principles.

Making the principles accessible

The principles should be made available to everyone working within an organisation or on a project or production with such organisations, as well as remote workers, freelancers and casual workers. They can be distributed in print format and electronically via email or online posting, making them as prominent as possible to everyone and in as many different formats as possible. All employees, workers and freelancers should be given a copy of the principles along with their contract and asked to sign a declaration to uphold the principles at the beginning of any work. All contracts with employers, employees, workers, freelancers, volunteers, directors and trustees should include provisions along the lines of the following:

1. The individual shall comply with these principles (as amended from time to time).
2. Breaches of the principles may lead to disciplinary action and/or termination of the contract.
3. Individuals should familiarise themselves with the principles and the guidance and should act in accordance with the information and advice.

The following organisations have publicly supported the set of principles:

- Association of British Theatre Technicians
- Association for Lighting Production and Design
- BECTU
- Casting Directors Guild
- Creu Cymru
- Equity
- Federation of Drama Schools
- Federation of Scottish Theatre
- Freelancers Make Theatre Work
- Incorporated Society of Musicians
- Independent Theatre Council
- League of Independent Producers
- Movement Directors Association
- Musicians' Union
- Parents and Carers in Performing Arts
- Production Managers' Forum
- Society of British Theatre Designers
- Stage Directors UK
- Stage Sight
- Theatre and Dance NI
- Writers' Guild of Great Britain

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