

## 1. Our Commitment

Freedom of expression is fundamental to our purpose as an arts organisation. We exist to support artistic risk, creative freedom, and the open exchange of ideas. Art has the power to challenge assumptions, provoke debate, and reflect the complexity of the world, and we actively protect the conditions in which this can happen.

We are committed to securing freedom of expression **within the law** for artists, speakers, staff, participants, and audiences, and to resisting unnecessary restrictions on artistic or cultural activity.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all programmes and activity presented by or in the name of the organisation, including:

- Exhibitions, performances, screenings, talks, workshops, and festivals
- Online and digital activity
- All artists, contributors, staff, freelancers, volunteers, and audiences
- All physical and digital spaces we manage or operate

## 3. Core Principles

- We operate with a **strong presumption in favour of freedom of expression**.
- Artistic and cultural expression may be controversial, unsettling, offensive to some, or politically charged; this is a normal and legitimate part of artistic practice.
- Exposure to challenging ideas or work does not in itself constitute harm or harassment.
- We believe that open engagement with difficult or unpopular ideas is preferable to suppression or silence.
- Peaceful protest, critique, and dissent are themselves forms of expression and are protected, provided they do not prevent others from participating.

## 4. What Freedom of Expression Protects

Freedom of expression includes the right to:

- Present, experience, and discuss artistic work without interference
- Express opinions, beliefs, and ideas, including those that are unpopular or contested
- Question, critique, or challenge artistic, social, political, or cultural norms
- Engage in debate, disagreement, and public discussion

The organisation will not restrict or cancel work or events simply because they generate controversy, attract criticism, or cause offence.

## 5. Legal and Safety Limits

Freedom of expression is protected **within the law**. Restrictions will be considered only where activity is likely to involve:

- Incitement to violence or hatred

- Harassment or unlawful discrimination
- Serious threats to public safety, health, or property
- Other unlawful activity

Any restrictions imposed will be **proportionate, evidence-based, and a last resort**, and the organisation will always seek ways to enable expression to take place safely rather than cancelling it. In assessing whether an event, exhibition or performance is within the law we will apply steps suggested by the Office for Students published framework here.

## 6. Use of Our Spaces

- Our spaces will not be denied to individuals or groups because of their artistic content, views, or beliefs alone.
- Where necessary, we may apply reasonable conditions relating to time, place, or manner (such as stewarding or security arrangements) to support safe delivery.
- Practical challenges such as cost, capacity, or security will be addressed with the aim of **supporting expression**, not limiting it.

## 7. Responsibilities and Good Order

Freedom of expression depends on mutual respect. Everyone taking part in our activities is expected to:

- Allow artists, speakers, and audiences to engage without intimidation or obstruction
- Avoid behaviour that prevents others from seeing, hearing, or participating
- Follow reasonable instructions from staff related to safety and event management

Disruption that denies others their right to lawful expression may result in intervention.

## 8. Institutional Role

As an organisation, we do not endorse the views expressed by artists or speakers. Our role is to **provide a platform, not a position**. We support the right to express ideas, not the ideas themselves.

## 9. Raising Concerns

Concerns about freedom of expression, safety, or conduct can be raised through our complaints or feedback process. All concerns will be considered carefully, with particular regard to the importance of protecting freedom of expression.

**Related short sample statement for website #1**  
**Our Commitment to Freedom of Expression**

**Our Commitment to Freedom of Expression**

We believe freedom of expression is essential to artistic practice and cultural life. Our organisation exists to support artists, audiences, and communities to explore ideas openly, creatively, and without fear.

We present work that may be challenging, provocative, or uncomfortable. This is a vital part of what art does: it asks questions, reflects complexity, and invites debate. We do not restrict artistic expression simply because it is controversial or causes offence.

We are committed to protecting freedom of expression within the law, while ensuring our spaces are safe and accessible. We support the right to peaceful protest, critique, and disagreement, provided these do not prevent others from engaging with our work.

Hosting an artist or event does not mean we endorse the views expressed. Our role is to provide a platform for expression, not to take a position.

**1. Our Commitment**

Freedom of expression is fundamental to our purpose as an arts organisation. We exist to support artistic risk, creative freedom, and the open exchange of ideas. Art has the capacity to challenge, provoke, disturb, and inspire, and we actively protect the conditions in which this can happen.

We are committed to securing freedom of expression **within the law** for artists, speakers, staff, participants, and audiences, and to resisting unnecessary or disproportionate restrictions on artistic and cultural activity.

**2. Legal Framework**

This policy is informed by, and operates in accordance with, UK law, including in particular:

- **Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights**, as incorporated into UK law by the **Human Rights Act 1998**, which protects the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority.
- The **Equality Act 2010**, which protects individuals from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- The **Public Order Act 1986**, relating to public order offences and incitement.
- The **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**.
- Relevant **health and safety legislation**, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit lawful freedom of expression beyond what is strictly required by these laws.

**3. Scope**

This policy applies to all activity presented by or in the name of the organisation, including:

- Exhibitions, performances, screenings, talks, workshops, and festivals
- Digital and online activity
- All artists, contributors, staff, freelancers, volunteers, trustees, and audiences
- All physical and digital spaces managed or operated by the organisation

**4. Core Principles**

- We operate with a **strong presumption in favour of freedom of expression**.
- Artistic and cultural expression may be controversial, unsettling, offensive to some, or politically charged; this is a legitimate and expected part of artistic practice.
- Offence, disagreement, or discomfort alone are not grounds for restricting expression.
- We believe that open engagement with difficult or unpopular ideas is preferable to censorship or suppression.
- Peaceful protest, critique, and dissent are themselves protected forms of expression, provided they do not prevent others from exercising their own lawful rights.

## 5. What Freedom of Expression Protects

Freedom of expression includes the right to:

- Create, present, experience, and discuss artistic work without undue interference
- Express ideas, opinions, and beliefs, including those that are unpopular, minority, or contested
- Critique institutions, power structures, social norms, and cultural practices
- Engage in debate, disagreement, and public discussion
- The organisation will not restrict, cancel, or distance itself from work or events solely because they attract controversy, criticism, or public complaint.

## 6. Lawful Limits and Proportionate Restrictions

Freedom of expression is protected **within the law**. Restrictions will be considered only where activity is likely to involve:

- Incitement to violence or hatred
- Harassment or unlawful discrimination
- Serious threats to public safety, health, or property
- Other clearly unlawful activity

Any restriction will be:

- **Evidence-based**
- **Proportionate**
- **A last resort**

Where risks are identified, the organisation will seek to enable expression to take place safely through reasonable mitigations rather than cancelling or prohibiting activity.

## 7. Use of Our Spaces

- Access to our spaces will not be denied solely on the basis of an individual's or group's views, beliefs, or artistic content.
- Reasonable conditions relating to time, place, or manner (such as stewarding, facilitation, or security measures) may be applied where necessary to support lawful and safe delivery.
- Practical considerations, including cost and capacity, will be addressed with the aim of **supporting expression**, not limiting it.

## 8. Behaviour and Good Order

Freedom of expression depends on the ability of all participants to engage. Everyone involved in our activities is expected to:

- Allow artists, speakers, and audiences to participate without intimidation or obstruction
- Refrain from abusive, threatening, or discriminatory behaviour
- Follow reasonable instructions from staff relating to safety and event management

Conduct that prevents others from exercising their lawful right to expression may result in intervention.

## 9. Institutional Role and Neutrality

The organisation does not endorse the views, opinions, or artistic positions expressed by artists or speakers. Our role is to **provide a platform for expression, not to adopt or promote particular viewpoints**.

## 10. Policy Ownership and Governance

This policy is owned by the **Board of Directors/Trustees** and is implemented by the senior leadership team. Responsibility for its day-to-day application sits with the **Chief Executive/Director** (or equivalent role).

The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains legally compliant and aligned with the organisation's purpose and values.

## 11. No Use of Non-Disclosure Agreements

The organisation **does not operate a policy of using Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)** to prevent artists, staff, freelancers, or participants from speaking about their experiences of working with or engaging with the organisation, including raising concerns, criticism, or complaints.

Nothing in our contracts or agreements is intended to restrict lawful freedom of expression or the ability to make protected disclosures.

## 12. Raising Concerns

Concerns relating to freedom of expression, safety, or conduct may be raised through the organisation's complaints or feedback procedures. All concerns will be considered carefully, fairly, and with particular regard to the importance of protecting freedom of expression.

**Related short sample statement for website #2**

**Freedom of Expression**

Freedom of expression is central to our mission as an arts organisation. We exist to support artistic freedom, creative risk, and open public dialogue. Art may be challenging, provocative, or unsettling, and we believe this is a vital and legitimate part of cultural life.

We operate with a **strong presumption in favour of freedom of expression within the law**, in line with **Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights**, as incorporated into UK law by the **Human Rights Act 1998**. We do not restrict or cancel work, events, or discussion simply because they are controversial, attract criticism, or cause offence.

Freedom of expression includes the right to create, present, experience, and debate artistic work, and to express ideas and opinions, including those that are unpopular or contested. Peaceful protest and critical response are also protected forms of expression, provided they do not prevent others from participating.

Expression may be restricted only where required by law, including where there is a serious risk of violence, harassment, unlawful discrimination, or threats to public safety. Any restrictions will be proportionate and used only as a last resort. Wherever possible, we will seek ways to enable work to take place safely rather than prevent it.

As an organisation, we do not endorse the views expressed by artists or speakers. Our role is to **provide a platform for expression, not to adopt particular viewpoints**.

This policy is owned by the organisation's **Board** and implemented by senior leadership.

We do **not** use Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to prevent artists, staff, freelancers, or participants from speaking about their experiences of working with us, including raising concerns or criticism. Nothing in our agreements is intended to restrict lawful freedom of expression or protected disclosures.