

FOST Volunteer Equality and Diversity – Anti Discrimination Policy

To be read in conjunction with the Friends of Shanklin Theatre Code of Conduct for Volunteers

AIMS

The Friends of Shanklin Theatre (FOST) is committed to providing a safe, flexible and respectful environment for volunteers, employed members of staff and visitors free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

- All volunteers are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect
- By effectively implementing our Equality and Diversity – Anti Discrimination Policy, we will attract and retain talented volunteers and staff to create a positive working environment for all

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All volunteers, including: officers of the FOST, department supervisors and coordinators.
- How the FOST provides services to clients and how it interacts with members of the public.
- All aspects of volunteering, recruitment and selection, conditions and training, task allocation, hours and equipment.
- Volunteers treatment of other staff, of clients, and of other members of the public encountered in the course of their duties.

The FOST may unilaterally introduce, vary, remove or replace this policy at any time.

VOLUNTEERS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All volunteers are entitled to:

- Recruitment and selection decisions based on merit and not affected by irrelevant personal characteristics
- Work free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- The right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised
- Reasonable flexibility in volunteering arrangements, especially where needed to accommodate their family responsibilities, disability, religious beliefs or culture

All volunteers must:

- Follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy
- Offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint
- Avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF - Officers of the FOST, department supervisors and coordinators

Officers of the FOST - Department supervisors and co-ordinators must also:

- Model appropriate standards of behaviour

- Take steps to appropriately advise and make volunteers aware of their obligations under this policy
- Intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour
- Act fairly to resolve issues and enforce workplace behavioural standards, making sure relevant parties are heard
- Help volunteers resolve complaints informally
- Refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to the appropriate department supervisor, co-ordinator or officer for investigation
- Ensure volunteers who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised
- Ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit and that no discriminatory requests for information are made
- Seriously consider requests for flexible volunteering arrangements

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

- Directly, when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law. For example, a volunteer is harassed and humiliated because of their race or a person is refused promotion because they are 'too old'
- Indirectly, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

VICTIMISATION

Victimisation is when someone treats you badly or subjects you to a detriment because you complain about discrimination or help someone who has been the victim of discrimination.

Example of Victimisation:

- If you're treated badly because you complain about discrimination or you help someone who has been discriminated against, this is called victimisation.

HARASSMENT

Harassment may be summarised as unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an individual, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.

Examples of Harassment include:

- Threats or abuse (spoken or written).
- Offensive emails, tweets, or comments on social networking sites.
- Physical behaviour like gestures or facial expressions.
- Pranks, jokes, or teasing.
- Exclusion or victimisation.
- Insults.
- Spreading rumours.

WHISTLE BLOWING

Workers or Volunteers in any organisation are often the first to realise that something doesn't seem quite right, but may feel they can't share their concerns, thinking that by speaking up they're being disloyal to their colleagues or to the Organisation concerned. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what they feel may be a problem.

Along with Shanklin Theatre, FOST is committed to running its Theatre operation to high ethical and legal standards, protecting and supporting, volunteers, employees and third parties. The ability to speak up so that any concerns or issues can be escalated and dealt with effectively, is in the best interest of Shanklin Theatre and FOST, helping to protect its business and all involved in carrying out its operation, including our audiences. In line with those commitments, we expect Volunteers and others that we deal with, who may have serious concerns about any aspect of the Theatre's operation to come forward and raise their concerns.

Along with Shanklin Theatre, FOST is committed to ensuring that all individuals have the ability to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

COMMUNICATION CHAIN

Officers of the FOST, department supervisors and co-ordinators take breaches of this policy seriously. Should any volunteer have a concern, they must, in the first instance, consult with their appropriate Supervisor.

Should the volunteer feel that the concern has not been resolved, the volunteer then has the opportunity to raise the issue with the Chairman or Secretary of FOST. If the Chairman or Secretary of FOST is unable to resolve the concern, they will refer the matter to the Managing Director of the Theatre.

In such cases, where the concern may have arisen with the Supervisor, the volunteer should communicate directly with the Chairman or Secretary of FOST. All these matters should be treated confidentially.

The FOST committee will annually review the FOST Volunteer Equality and Diversity – Anti Discrimination Policy.

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