Organising Events with External Speakers Policy

Purpose of the policy

We recognise the value that external speakers can bring to learning and development by sharing knowledge, experience and different perspectives. This policy sets out how Sport Structures ensures that external speakers are appropriate for the intended audience and that any potential safeguarding or Prevent risks are identified and managed.

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive learning environment while respecting freedom of speech and encouraging open, respectful discussion within the law.

The policy supports our safeguarding responsibilities and our approach to the Prevent duty, helping to protect apprentices, staff and others who participate in our activities from the risk of harm, including being drawn into terrorism.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to external speakers invited to contribute to activities organised or delivered by us, including:

- Face to face training, workshops and events.
- Virtual training sessions, presentations and webinars.
- External contributions to apprenticeship learning and development.

It applies to all staff involved in identifying, arranging or overseeing external speakers, and to external speakers themselves. The policy applies regardless of whether the activity takes place at an employer's workplace, another external venue or online.

It does not replace our wider safeguarding responsibilities or the procedures set out in our Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

This policy should also be read alongside our other policies including (list not exhaustive):

- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- E safety Policy
- IT Use Policy
- Cultural Code for Staff and Workforce

These can be found on our website here. The policy has also been developed in reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Prevent Duty Guidance, along with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Roles and responsibilities

At Sport Structures:

- Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring this policy is reviewed annually and updated when necessary.
- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities under this policy and that appropriate arrangements are in place for the planning and management of external speakers.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are responsible for providing advice and guidance where concerns are identified about a proposed external speaker or session, supporting the assessment of any safeguarding or Prevent risks and advising on appropriate measures to manage those risks.
- Employees and associates are responsible for familiarising themselves with and following this policy, including raising any concerns about external speakers in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding procedures.

For staff arranging or overseeing a speaker:

- Consider the purpose and suitability of the proposed speaker
- Ensure the speaker completes the self-declaration before the session
- Review the information provided and refer any concerns to the DSL(s)
- Agree the session content and expectations with the speaker

- Oversee the session and report any concerns in line with our safeguarding procedures

External speakers should:

- Provide accurate information through the self-declaration process
- Deliver the agreed session content in a manner appropriate to the audience.
- Respect Sport Structures' safeguarding expectations and relevant policies.
- Avoid promoting or encouraging discrimination, hatred, violence, extremism or terrorism.
- Raise any concerns about the session or its content with the organising member of staff

Principles: Safeguarding, Prevent and freedom of expression

We support freedom of speech and expression and recognise the importance of allowing learners to explore different perspectives, discuss challenging subjects and engage in debate.

However, freedom of expression must operate within the law and be balanced with our responsibility to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment.

We will not provide a platform for external speakers to:

- Encourage, glorify or promote terrorism or terrorist organisations.
- Incite violence, hatred or unlawful activity.
- Promote discrimination, intolerance or the targeting of individuals or groups.
- Use a learning activity to promote extremist views or encourage others to support terrorism.

The discussion of controversial, political, religious or sensitive subjects is not, in itself, a reason to prevent a speaker from contributing. Decisions will be based on the proposed content, context and any identified risks.

Sport Structures will take a proportionate approach, seeking to manage risks wherever possible while protecting legitimate discussion and debate.

Arranging an external speaker

Before confirming an external speaker, the organising member of staff must consider the purpose of the session, the intended audience and the suitability of the proposed speaker. All external speakers must complete the **External Speaker Self-Declaration Form**, provided separately online, before the session takes place.

The form will request information about the speaker's professional background, proposed session content and any relevant information that may raise concerns about their suitability.

The organising member of staff is responsible for:

- Reviewing the completed self-declaration.
- Considering the proposed content and any resources or materials the speaker intends to use.
- Undertaking proportionate background checks where appropriate.
- Referring any concerns or uncertainty to the DSL before confirming the session.
- Agreeing the purpose, content and expectations for the session with the speaker.

The process should be completed sufficiently in advance to allow any concerns to be considered and addressed before the session takes place.

Assessing and managing risks.

Most external speaker contributions will present a low level of risk and can be managed through the normal arrangements set out in this policy.

Where information provided by the speaker, background checks or the proposed content raises concerns, the organising member of staff must seek advice from one of the company DSL's. Factors that may require further consideration include:

- Concerns about the speaker's background, previous activities or public statements.
- Links to individuals or organisations associated with terrorism or extremism.
- Proposed content that may promote hatred, discrimination or intolerance.

- Materials or resources that may be inappropriate for the intended audience.
- Concerns about the potential impact of the session on apprentices or staff.

The DSL will advise whether further information, checks or a more detailed risk assessment are required. Depending on the circumstances, appropriate action may include:

- Allowing the session to proceed as planned.
- Agreeing changes to the content or format.
- Introducing additional oversight or safeguards.
- Providing opportunities for discussion, challenge or alternative perspectives.
- Postponing or cancelling the session where risks cannot be appropriately managed.

Decisions must be proportionate and take account of safeguarding responsibilities, the Prevent duty and the importance of freedom of expression.

Managing the speaker session

The member of staff arranging the session is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for its delivery. This includes:

- Making sure the speaker understands the agreed purpose, content and expectations.
- Ensuring the session is appropriate for the intended audience.
- Identifying a member of staff to oversee the session.
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for online sessions, including managing access and participation.
- Being prepared to intervene if the content or conduct of the speaker raises concerns.

Where a session takes place at an employer's workplace or another external venue, the organising member of staff should consider any relevant arrangements with the host organisation. For virtual sessions, staff should use appropriate meeting controls and ensure they know how to manage inappropriate contributions or remove an unauthorised participant where necessary.

Responding to concerns

Any concerns arising before, during or after an external speaker session must be reported to one of the company DSL's in line with our Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

If a speaker moves away from the agreed content or expresses views that raise safeguarding or Prevent concerns, the member of staff overseeing the session should take appropriate action. This may include challenging the content, intervening or bringing the session to an end.

The DSL will consider the concern and determine the appropriate next steps, including whether further safeguarding action or an external referral is required. All concerns, decisions and actions must be recorded in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.
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Monitoring and review

We will maintain a record of external speaker sessions and the completion of the self-declaration process.

The policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed periodically and following any significant concerns or changes to relevant legislation or guidance.