

Organising Events with External Speakers Policy

Introduction

Sport Structures is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising these events. This applies, therefore, to those hiring our premises as well as our own employees.

It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting staff (salaried and associate) and learners and our reputation, whilst following the legislation that we are responsible for upholding. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Objectives of the policy

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected whilst balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive, and safe space for learners.
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that Sport Structures can meet their legal obligations.
- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding policy and that both Sport Structures and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with an external contribution.

Freedom of speech and expression

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff and learners. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for staff and learners. We want all our events, activities and initiatives to be safe, without risk to Sport Structures, and within the law.

If an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event, we are committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

External speakers and their responsibilities

An external speaker, guest speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a staff member of Sport Structures and who has been invited to speak to staff, learners or delegates attending an event either in a face-to-face environment or virtually. It also includes any partner or external organisation that hires our office premises.

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by an individual or staff member that is being held on Sport Structures premises or where Sport Structures is being represented by a stand in an event environment e.g., at an exhibition, event or fair. It can also include virtual events using online software such as 'live' streaming or a pre-recorded film.

All external speakers, guest speakers or visitors should be made aware by the staff member arranging the event that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the Sport Structures policies including that they:

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law.
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony.
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seeking to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge.
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without the express permission of Sport Structures (available from the Director).

Guidance for Sport Structures staff and learners organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client

The Directors must be informed of any events that involve external speakers through this procedure. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This includes advertisements through any social media platform.

The Request for Prior Approval for an External/Guest Speaker (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the HR Manager no later than 14 days before the planned event. This form will then be circulated to the Directors. This is to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allow time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

The Directors will then confirm whether the External/Guest Speaker has been accepted or declined.

If accepted, the HR Manager will contact the External/Guest Speaker to share The Expectations and Guidelines document for External Speakers. The External/Guest Speaker must declare their commitment to the terms outlined in the document before they can proceed.

Sport Structures reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the policy is not followed or if health, safety, and security criteria cannot be met.

The Sport Structures staff member organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the decision to the Director(s). Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following:

- any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations-->
- talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist.
- a speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another organisation on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of staff, learners or delegates.
- a speaker accepted in the mainstream as being highly controversial.

- a link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature.

- a speaker who has a significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues.

- a speaker from a political party during an election.

In the event of a referral, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event).
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

In making recommendations, the Directors will consult on a wider basis with Sport Structures Safeguarding and Prevent Group and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

1. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech.
2. The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputation risk to Sport Structures.
3. The potential for the speakers' presence to cause fear or alarm to staff, learners or delegates and/or to give rise to a breach of peace.

Additional guidance for organisations wishing to hire the Sport Structures office and use external speakers

Sport Structures reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any hire booking at the office with external speakers if the policy is not followed, the requested information is not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

Linked Policies:

- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, Strategy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy

Request for Prior Approval Form for an External Speaker

The staff member must submit this form at least 14 days prior to hosting an event with an external speaker to a Director.

Staff member:	
Date of request:	
Event date:	
Event time:	
Name of speaker:	
Organisation representing (if applicable):	
Topic:	
Background/expertise of Speaker to address the topic:	
How does this topic specifically support your event?	
Is there any known or likely media interest in the proposed event?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have adequate checks been carried out?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please specify:	
Any further comments?	
For office use	
Approval status:	Grated <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/>
Director signature:	
Date:	

Expectations and Guidelines for External Speakers

Thank you for agreeing to be a guest speaker and offering to speak to our staff, learners or delegates. If you are attending our office premises, it is encouraged that you sign in and a member of staff will be present to meet with you and accompany you to our meeting room. If the event is virtual, a member of staff will welcome you online and give you the relevant access rights, when required.

In order to comply with our policies and procedure, any materials and presentations given to staff, learners or delegates must not seek to discriminate against any culture, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion, and must be appropriate to the age and maturity level of the student audience. In addition, external guest speakers:

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law.
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony.
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seeking to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge.

If you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact our Equality and Diversity Officer Rebecca Gibson:

Email: Rebecca.Gibson@sportstructures.com

Phone: 07917 388 170

If attending a face-to-face event, Sport Structures will not, in any circumstances, be liable to guest speakers or to any third party for any loss, damage, cost or other liability which occurs as a result of, or in connection with external/guest speakers providing external/guest speaking services to staff, learners or delegates at our office premises. Any liability which results from fraud or from death or personal injury caused by negligence is excluded.

External/Guest Speaker Declaration	
I, _____ (External/Guest Speaker, have read, understood, and agree to all of the conditions above.	
External/Guest Speaker full name:	
External/Guest Speaker signature:	
Date:	

Please return this form at least 7 days prior to the event to Teodora.Geleva@sportstructures.com