

## Scottish Storytelling Centre and the Church of Scotland: Safer Spaces Policy

### Who are we?

The Scottish Storytelling Centre is a vibrant arts venue with a rolling programme of live storytelling, theatre, music, exhibitions, workshops, family events, and festivals. We are the home to the Scottish International Storytelling Festival in October and a venue for Edinburgh Tradfest in spring and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August, as well as exciting cultural programmes and partnerships all year round. It is owned by the Church of Scotland (Scottish Charity No SCO11353) and managed in association with TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland, Scottish Charity No SC043009).

### Our values

A safer space is a shared responsibility. Through mutual respect, care, and creativity, we can ensure the Centre remains a vibrant, inclusive space where all voices are heard and valued.

The Church of Scotland has a deep concern for the wholeness and wellbeing of each individual and seeks to safeguard the welfare of all individuals who come into contact with the Church, its services, and its spaces. Underpinning all that we do at the Scottish Storytelling Centre are the principles which the Church strives to uphold:

**Grace:** Acting with humility in all our endeavours

**Integrity:** Acting with honesty, responsibility and accountability

**Respect:** Valuing others, ensuring inclusiveness and equality

**Professionalism:** Demonstrating commitment and striving for excellence

**Collaboration:** Working together to connect and communicate in an open and transparent environment

**Innovation:** Thinking creatively about building for the future and embracing change

---

### What is a safer spaces policy?

We are committed to creating and maintaining a welcome, inclusive and respectful environment for everyone – audiences, artists, staff and visitors alike. A safer spaces policy tells stakeholders what our expectations are for those using the venue, outlining the shared responsibility to foster a space that is supportive and free from discrimination, harassment or harm. It includes policies on language, behaviour and use of the building and lays out what our process will be if these policies are breached. It also tells stakeholders how they can alert us to issues they have identified or ways their needs have not been met.

### Why develop this policy?

As a platform for creative arts, we are a place where ideas are explored. That means people may sometimes disagree with, or have strong reactions to, the content of shows, workshops, events or exhibitions. Performers, artists, facilitators and participants must be free to express

themselves and communicate their ideas. However, it is unacceptable to utilise our platform to disseminate hate speech or discriminatory views. Developing this policy is part of our aim to be welcoming and inclusive to all visitors, performers and audiences.

### **Who is this policy for?**

This policy applies to all staff including freelancers, audiences, visitors, vendors, performers and visiting companies. It is included as part of our staff training manuals, venue contracts and our terms and conditions for ticket purchase.

---

### **Code of Conduct**

To foster a welcoming and inclusive environment we must all behave with respect and courtesy to others. This means:

**Creating an environment free from any kind of harassment, bullying or discrimination.** This includes physically or sexually harassing another person, making derogatory remarks, or discriminating against someone due to their race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, background or other characteristics.

**Considering content.** As an artist, performer or facilitator, we ask that you carefully consider the content of your work and what impact it may have on an audience. For example, if your work explores themes which may require content or trigger warnings, you should discuss this with the venue in advance so that we can give audiences or participants the opportunity to make an informed choice about their attendance. We respect the right of everyone to express controversial, challenging or even offensive views but we expect consideration of the rights and feelings of others and do not allow gratuitously offensive behaviour on our premises.

**Maintaining professionalism.** In the friendly and informal environment we foster at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, it is possible to forget that we are still in the workplace. As a member of permanent, temporary or freelance staff, or as a volunteer, you must maintain professional standards and boundaries in all interactions with audiences, performers, facilitators and anyone else you encounter in the course of your work.

**Being understanding of diverse needs and boundaries.** Something that doesn't affect one person may have a significant impact on someone else and vice versa.

**Respecting the space.** This means being careful with equipment, behaving courteously towards staff, consuming alcohol responsibly and being aware of your limits.

**Not engaging in inflammatory or aggressive behaviour.** For example, using profanity or raised voices towards staff or other visitors.

**Avoiding making assumptions about others.** From their gender identity to their access needs, there is no way to know what someone's situation is just by looking at them.

**Reporting or raising concerns if you are subject to or witness a breach of this Code of Conduct.** We will always try to be aware of what is going on in the venue, but we cannot be everywhere at once. Find details below of how you can report issues or raise concerns.

## Unacceptable Behaviours

The following behaviours are not tolerated in any form:

- Harassment (verbal, physical, or visual)
  - Hate speech or prejudice as prohibited by the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021<sup>1</sup>
  - Unwanted physical contact or advances
  - Intimidation, bullying, or sustained disruption
- 

## What we will do

We recognise that building a safer space is an ongoing process. We commit to:

**Leading by example** in always upholding this policy.

**Communicating** this policy to all staff, audiences, performers, vendors, partner organisations and anyone else using our venue.

**Training** staff and volunteers adequately.

**Reviewing** this policy regularly in collaboration with community feedback.

**Continuing dialogue** with stakeholders to ensure the space evolves with their needs.

**Keeping audiences informed** as far as we are able about the nature and content of the shows and events we host. Many of our shows are being performed for the first time so we may not always be able to identify potential issues until after the performance or event has taken place. In that instance we will discuss with the performer/facilitator.

**Taking action** if required, as laid out below.

## Appropriate action

Should this policy be breached, we will take appropriate action. These actions could be:

- Issue of a verbal or written warning
- Removal from the performance, event, workshop or activity
- Banning from future events
- Termination of professional relationship, for example not booking that performer or facilitator in the future
- Support for the complainant, for example signposting to support services or arranging transport home
- Contacting police

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2021/14/contents>

- Immediate termination of the venue hire contract

### **How you can get in touch**

If you have experienced or witnessed behaviour that breaches the Code of Conduct, compromises the policy or that concerns you in any other way, please get in touch with us. We would also welcome feedback on the policy itself.

While in the Scottish Storytelling Centre you can alert the Duty Manager (identified by a red lanyard), or if you would prefer you can contact the management team:

By email: [supporters@scottishstorytellingcentre.com](mailto:supporters@scottishstorytellingcentre.com)

By post: Scottish Storytelling Centre, 43-45 High Street, EH1 1RS

By phone: 0131 652 3273