

# **Bullying, Harassment and Unwanted Sexual Attention**

(adapted from the policies adopted by the Royal Court Theatre)



Oxford Theatre Guild aims to provide the best possible working environment for all involved in our activities, one that is based on collaboration and respect.

We expect everyone to recognise that each individual has a right to a working environment which encourages respectful, considerate, dignified and non-sexualised working relationships. It is the duty of everyone to treat their colleagues with dignity and respect and we are opposed to harassment and bullying in any form. Everyone is responsible for their own behaviour in this regard and any threatening, aggressive, bullying behaviour, harassment or unwanted sexual attention, language or behaviour may result in disciplinary action.

Harassment includes any behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, humiliating or hostile, which interferes with individual's work, which causes stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person and behaviour which sexualises the workplace. Harassment based on age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, or harassment of a sexual nature, is unlawful and may render the persons responsible personally liable for legal action or even criminal proceedings.

This policy on harassment and bullying applies to all involved in Guild activities – on and off stage. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in these activities to ensure this policy is upheld and clearly communicated to everyone.

## **Definition of sexual harassment**

Any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of individuals – which can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct whereby the behaviour is inappropriate, offensive or distressing for the recipient, and such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexualised environment for the recipient. Conduct or comments become harassment when they are unwelcome to others or make others feel uncomfortable or threatened, even if they are intended as a joke. Intention is not the same as impact.

## **Conduct may include:**

- Insulting and sexualised remarks
- Grabbing, deliberate touching
- Suggestive gestures and jokes
- Staring, meaningful glances
- Seemingly accidental touching
- Demand for sexual attention
- Derogatory remarks about an individual's body, manner or sexual activities
- Insult after rejection of an advance and/or repeated propositions
- Showing, sending or display of pornography
- Promise of advantage for sexual concessions
- Threat of disadvantage for rejection of advances
- Physical force, or threat of force, for sexual action

This list is not exhaustive and we recognise that unwanted sexual attention can take many forms.

## **Principles**

We ask everyone involved in OTG activities to consider the impact that their actions or comments may have on others and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

If you feel comfortable doing so, we encourage you to firstly directly address your concern with the individual(s) involved. This helps foster an honest and open community and is often the fastest path to a resolution.

We encourage everyone to report instances of sexual harassment and encourage their peers to do the same. Peer to peer support will help create a culture where inappropriate sexual behaviour or language is completely unacceptable and can be challenged either in the moment or through the formal procedure.

We will keep a log of incidents which are reported to the Committee to help identify patterns.

We will ensure we raise awareness of sexual harassment, keeping the conversation live and giving people the confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour or language.

We will communicate this policy clearly to everyone involved in OTG activities.

This policy is endorsed and supported by the Committee.

## **Reporting**

The procedure for reporting is outlined below and all cases will be taken seriously and treated sensitively.

Each stage of the procedure should be agreed, in writing, with the complainant. We recognise that experiencing harassment can be complex and that thoughts and feelings around a particular incident may change during this process.

Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported to a colleague who you trust – this can be a member of a production team, a committee member or any other colleague.

**Stage One:** report in writing (by email) and verbally (in a confidential environment) to your chosen colleague to register your complaint. Include evidence if you have it.

**Stage Two:** Your chosen colleague will share this evidence with the Committee and a discussion will take place as to what action should be taken. In the event of any perceived conflict of interest, the Committee will appoint an independent representative to act on their behalf.

**Stage Three:** A member of the Committee (or their appointed representative) will meet with the complainant in a safe, confidential environment to talk more about the events and to assess how they feel. This meeting is informal, and gentle and aimed at generating a sensitive, high level, bespoke response. The complainant may bring a colleague or friend to this meeting.

**Stage Four:** The member of the Committee (or their appointed representative) will meet with the person against whom the complaints/reports are brought. This meeting is in a safe, confidential environment and an appropriate amount of time must be given to this meeting.

**Stage Five:** The Committee will discuss the outcomes of these meetings and include others, where appropriate. The Committee are able to form a wider confidential group as an Ethics Committee to discuss nuanced cases which may have serious repercussions for either party.

**Stage Six:** Actions are agreed and communicated to both parties.

*Drafted by Simon Tavener for OTG, January 2018*

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*Adopted by the committee March 2018*