

Darlington Culture Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Dignity and Respect

Darlington Culture Volunteers will not tolerate or condone harassment or bullying in any form.

Complaints of harassment and bullying will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with promptly, confidentially and sensitively. The policy aims to:

- Enable all volunteers to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Ensure that volunteers understand their right not to tolerate this kind of behaviour and how to deal with it if it occurs.
- Help the organisation to deal with issues as quickly and effectively as possible.
- Promote fairness and transparency by providing written rules and procedures that are specific, clear and applied consistently.
- Promote a volunteering culture which is free from hostility and intimidating behaviour; where everyone feels a personal responsibility to ensure that the dignity and feelings of individuals are not abused and where individuals feel confident enough to bring complaints without fear of ridicule or reprisal.

Unacceptable behaviour

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault,
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, pictures, sexual innuendoes, computer messages, gossip, slander or letters,
- visual display of inappropriate materials, posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, etc.,
- isolation of individuals, e.g. exclusion from a group or departmental activities,
- coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours through to pressure to, participate in political or religious groups etc.,
- intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking,
- Intimidating behaviour or abuse of power.

Regardless of the definition, if the behaviour of an individual volunteer or group of volunteers is unwarranted and unwelcome, then this can be addressed by this policy.

The perception of the individual is important - what one person may regard as acceptable, may be unacceptable to another person.

Volunteer Co-ordinators should also be able to raise issues with volunteers in a constructive way regarding performance.

If you feel you uncomfortable or wish to raise any concerns then please...

1. Ask the person to stop and/or ask for help.
2. Raise your concerns in the first instance with your Volunteer Co-ordinator or another member of the team that you feel comfortable talking to. They will try and resolve the situation on an informal basis.
3. If you feel the matter needs further discussion or intervention you can ask for it to be raised it at either the Executive group of the Collaboration Steering Group.

If you wish to raise an anonymous complaint we can only consider these in exceptional circumstances, and any decision to consider an anonymous allegation will be at the discretion of the Collaboration Steering Group and

- a. The seriousness of the issue raised.
- b. The credibility of the concern.
- c. The likelihood of being able to investigate the allegation

Accepting Complaints from the public

- 1) Listen to the feedback and if you can, deal with it at the time to the satisfaction of the member of the public.
The majority of people making a complaint are seeking an apology and an explanation
- 2) If you are not able to deal with it then please find either the Volunteer Co-ordinator or event Supervisor.
- 3) If the relevant person is not available, the please pass on the concerns as soon as possible and take the name of details of the customer. Please reassure the customer that their complaint is being dealt with seriously and we will contact them to discuss it further.

Feedback and Evaluation

- We appreciate any feedback you can provide about your volunteering experience with us.
- We will ask for verbal feedback on an event by event basis, and occasionally via written forms.
- We will use your feedback to improve the service and support we can offer to volunteers.
- Some events and companies will have a formal and unique evaluation system, such the Touring Consortium Theatre Company, Jabberwocky, Festival of Thrift and Darlington Hippodrome.