

Dignity and Respect at Work Policy

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Policy Access Statement

At the National Theatre we are committed to ensuring an inclusive and accessible experience for everyone.

This policy can be provided in other formats including braille. Please contact **people@nationaltheatre.org.uk** to request the format you require.

Every department has a dedicated People Business Partner and People Advisor who can support and advise anyone working in that department on HR issues, policy and procedure. Your People Advisor will be happy to meet with you to read through and discuss this policy with you if you would find that helpful.

You can find a list of People Business Partners and People Advisors contact details on [the NT Hub here](#).

Feedback

We want to make our policies as clear and accessible as possible. We welcome feedback on this policy via our email address people@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Purpose

At the National Theatre (NT) we are committed to creating an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect, free from bullying, harassment and any form of discrimination and/or victimisation.

We will support, develop, and encourage everyone to challenge unacceptable behaviour towards themselves and others both informally and formally. We encourage everyone to speak up if they experience or witness any unacceptable behaviour.

The NT's Dignity and Respect at Work Policy supports **our core values** of empowering each other and making a positive impact, as we work to build and uphold an inclusive and equitable culture. It underpins how we must work together as colleagues and sets out the procedure to be followed in relation to instances of bullying and harassment as well as related discrimination and/or victimisation

This policy is compliant with the ACAS Code of Practice and employment legislation and has been developed with reference to ACAS guidance on Discrimination and Bullying, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) technical guidance on sexual harassment and harassment at work.

For any complaints about visitors to the NT, the 'Everyone's Welcome' reporting process and policy should be followed and can be accessed [here](#).

Scope

This policy applies to anyone who works for or with the NT.

The resolution processes set out in this policy has two stages – informal and formal. We follow these processes for both staff and freelance practitioners, creatives and company members. These processes do not apply to workers who are not directly employed by the NT including: agency workers and anyone working for a third-party supplier, where their employer's procedure will apply.

This policy and procedure do not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

Principles

- The NT is committed to an inclusive workplace where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Those found to have bullied, behaved in a discriminatory way, harassed or sexually harassed others will face disciplinary proceedings and action, up to and including, in the most serious of cases dismissal and/or no longer working with company members, freelance artists and practitioners.
- The NT is committed to recognising intersectionality, valuing the strength that comes from diversity.
- The NT is committed to resolving issues as soon as possible and everyone is encouraged to raise issues as soon as they occur or as soon as they feel able to so they can be addressed promptly and fully.
- Individuals and managers should make every attempt, where appropriate, to resolve issues informally (including through mediation), without recourse to the formal procedure.
- Anyone complained about has the right to know, at the earliest opportunity, of the complaint being made against them and be given the right to respond.
- Any complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination and/or victimisation will be dealt with sensitively with consideration for the care and support of all parties involved.
- All matters relating to the application of this policy will be dealt with in line with the NT's data protection policies and guidance.
- Where any concerns of safeguarding are identified, the NTs safeguarding policy should be referred to.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is offensive, abusive, intimidating, or malicious behaviour or abuse of power which makes the recipient feel threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, causes physical or emotional harm, and undermines their confidence. Bullying most commonly occurs as a repeated pattern of unacceptable behaviour. It might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident.

Examples include:

- Shouting at someone
- Persistent and unfair criticism
- Ostracising people
- Threatening someone
- Inappropriate use of email
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Constantly undermining efforts
- Removing areas of responsibility or imposing inappropriate tasks.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct affecting people's dignity. It may be comments or actions that are demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient or which create a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. Harassment can occur whether or not it is intended to be offensive, as it is the effect on the individual, which is important, not whether or not the behaviour is intended to harass them.

Harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, isolated or repeated and it can occur through behaviour in relation to age, disability (past or present), gender reassignment, 'race', colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual

orientation, trade union membership (or non-membership), part time or fixed term status, power or hierarchy and/or willingness to challenge harassment.

While not an exhaustive list, examples of harassment include:

- Physical contact and obscene or offensive gestures
- ‘Jokes’, ‘banter’, gossip, mimicry, slander, offensive language, shouting and/or behaving in an intimidating manner
- Offensive, insensitive or sectarian songs or messages (including email)
- Displaying offensive posters or pictures, graffiti, emblems, flags, email and screen savers etc
- Isolation or non-co-operation and exclusion
- Undue pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking
- Continued requests for social activities after it has been made clear that such suggestions are not welcome
- Verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to unwanted conduct

Harassment is unlawful in many cases and individuals may be held personally liable for their actions. In some cases, their behaviour may also amount to a criminal offence.

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which affects people’s dignity. An individual of any gender may be the victim of sexual harassment.

Examples include:

- sexually suggestive comments, ‘jokes’ or gestures
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs

- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- sexual posts or contact on social media
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

The NT is committed to building a culture of safety and zero tolerance of behaviour amounting to sexual harassment. The NT has put in place sexual harassment risk assessments for all departments to help identify areas of risk and practical solutions and a rollout of training for both managers and staff.

Microaggressions

Typically subtle comments, questions or behaviours that are offensive or inappropriate, sometimes without the person who's doing it realising it. This type of language or behaviour may not always be intended, but can lead to someone feeling offended, unsafe or like they don't belong.

Victimisation

Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or give evidence in relation to a complaint. This could include, for example, isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a more difficult workload.

Direct discrimination

When someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a legally protected characteristic they have or are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic. The list of legally protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, race/nationality, religion/belief, sex and sexuality.

Indirect discrimination

When a provision, rule, policy or practice disadvantages a particular group with a protected characteristic (e.g. race, gender, disability) because a considerably smaller proportion of that group can comply with it.

What to do if you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour

We encourage individuals to make every attempt, where appropriate and where they feel comfortable to resolve issues informally. Giving the other person the opportunity to know how their words or actions made you feel can be an important first step in supporting changes in practice and behaviour. It also gives an opportunity for the working relationship to be repaired at the earliest possible time.

However there will be some circumstances where an informal approach will not be appropriate, for example for very serious allegations, where an attempt has already been made to resolve the matter informally or where the allegations are of sexual harassment.

In these circumstances please move directly to reporting the issue to a manager or to the People & Culture team - **please see page 10 for more details.**

Talking to the person directly

If you feel able, you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the person directly. Sometimes a person does not realise the impact their behaviour is having or that it is unwelcome.

An open and honest conversation, explaining clearly what aspect of the person's behaviour is unacceptable, or is causing offence and asking them to stop, can be sufficient to help them understand the impact of the behaviour and to change it.

One way to manage this is to follow the **IDEA framework**:

Interrupt when the inappropriate behaviour occurs, **Describe** to the person what they said, **Explain** why their behaviour is inappropriate, with the aim of the person **Acknowledging** their mistake and acting to rectify it.

Where you would like support to take this approach, you can contact your People Business Partner or People Advisor, who will be able to provide support and advice. (You can find a list of People Business Partners and People Advisors contact details on [the NT Hub here.](#))

Next steps - reporting an issue, incident or concern

If speaking talking directly to the person was unsuccessful or it is inappropriate due to severity of the incident or situation, you should report the issue, incident or concern directly to a manager (your own line manager in the first instance if that is not the person about whom you are complaining) or to the National Theatre's People and Culture team via the NT's reporting tool, Report and Support

reportandsupport.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Ideally this would be as soon as possible or as soon as you feel able after the incident. This will enable us to have the best chance to investigate it fairly whilst it is still fresh in people's minds.

See over for a list of people you can report an issue, incident or concern and ways to report.

Who to speak to report an issue, incident or concern

Your job or role type	Who you can report an issue, incident or concern to
<p>Company members, musicians, creatives and any other freelance practitioners working in the rehearsal room and performance.</p>	<p>You can speak any of the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Company Stage Manager (or if the issue relates to the CSM, then the Head of Company Stage Management.) • Casting or Company Administration • the People and Culture team – via the Report and Support system or you can email them direct to set up a time to meet – see page 13
<p>Freelance practitioners working in any department across the NT</p>	<p>You can speak any of the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the manager for the area of work you are working in. • the Head of Department for the department you are working in. • the Producer of the production or project you are working on. • the People and Culture team – via the Report and Support system or you can email them direct to set up a time to meet – see page 13

Your job or role type	Who you can report an issue, incident or concern to
Staff member	<p>You can speak any of the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your line manager • Any other manager in your dept. • Your Head of Department/Director • the People and Culture team – via the Report and Support system or you can email them direct to set up a time to meet – see page 13

Reporting using the Report and Support online system

Report and Support is the National Theatre's secure, online reporting tool which allows anyone working at the NT to report of an issue, incident or concern related to dignity and respect at work including bullying, discrimination and harassment of any kind.

reportandsupport.nationaltheatre.org.uk/ The system allows you to report either anonymously or with your contact details.

You can report unacceptable behaviour you have experienced or you have witnessed happening to someone-else.

Submitting a report takes around 5 – 10 minutes. Most questions use tick boxes and there is a one free text box to describe what happened.

Your report will go directly to the People Business Partner and People Advisor for your department. If you report with your contact details, they will follow up with you to find out more and discuss possible next steps including signposting sources of support.

If you submit your report anonymously, the system will not ask for any identifying information. The system's security encryption does not allow us to see any identifying data such as your IP address or location. This means you will not get a response to an

anonymous report unless you activate the two-way messaging option, which allows the People and Culture team to message you via the site.

Reporting anonymously

All reports submitted to Report and Support will be followed up. We will take action based on what we know, however please note there is a limit to the direct action we can take based on an anonymous report. Allowing the use of the two way messaging option allows us to seek clarity and gather as much information as possible to address the issue. If you choose not to allow the two-way messaging system your anonymous report helps to build a picture of what is happening around the NT, which informs the NT's preventative work related to unacceptable behaviour, such as targeted training or risk assessments.

Speaking directly to the People and Culture team

Another way you can report an incident, issue or concern is to speak directly to the People and Culture team. You can email the People Business Partner or People Advisor for your department to set up a time to speak to them to report what has happened. You don't need to give details of the incident or issue in the email, just state you have something to report and you would like to speak to someone about it.

You can find a list of People Business Partners and People Advisors with their departments and email addresses on [the NT Hub here](#). Or email [**people@nationaltheatre.org.uk**](mailto:people@nationaltheatre.org.uk) and your message will be passed to the People Business Partner or Advisor for your department.

What will happen once you have reported an incident, issue or concern.

Once you have reported an issue, incident or concern, either the People Advisor or People Business Partner for your department or your line manager (if not the person to whom the complaint relates to) will follow up with you to find out more about the incident, issue or concern and to discuss next steps.

A majority of workplace issues can and should be dealt with informally, via conversation at the appropriate level, most often between line managers and their

team members. This informal stage is aimed at quickly resolving the situation and allowing individuals to know where they stand. In many cases simply being made aware of an issue and discussing how it might be sensibly addressed is the best way of achieving resolution.

Mediation

Mediation may be suggested as a next step. This is a confidential and voluntary process, often used to resolve complex issues. This can be used at any time, during a conflict or disagreement, if both parties agree and it's appropriate. Led by a trained mediator as an impartial third party, the process aims to create a safe, confidential space for those involved to find solutions that are acceptable to each side.

Investigation

It may be necessary for your People Business Partner or People Adviser or another nominated manager to carry out an investigation to build up a full picture of the incident/issue from all sides, ensure everyone involved is treated fairly and work out what should happen next.

This process will include cross checking times, dates and other facts by referring to any relevant documents such as rotas and emails. We will speak to and take statements from everyone involved including any witnesses and the person/s who have been accused of unacceptable behaviour.

Next steps

Next steps will vary depending on the nature of the incident or issue. They may include:

a formal grievance procedure – This procedure will usually be followed if the issue is very, very serious or informal action has not worked. The NT's formal grievance procedure can be found on the NT Hub [here](#).

a formal disciplinary procedure – This procedure outlines the formal way we will deal with misconduct following an investigation and grievance procedure. Those found to have bullied, behaved in a discriminatory way, harassed or sexually harassed others will face disciplinary proceedings and action, up to and including, in the most serious of cases dismissal and/or no longer working with a freelance practitioner, creative or

company member. The NT's formal disciplinary policy can be found on the NT Hub [here](#).

Support

If you want to discuss any aspect of this policy or if you need support to deal with any issues you are facing you can access this via your line manager and/or by speaking directly with your People Business Partner or Adviser. You can find the list of People Business Partners and People Advisors and contact details on [the NT Hub here](#). Or you can email people@nationaltheatre.org.uk and we will pass you to the right person.

You can also find support via the NTs Welfare and Wellbeing team. They can offer support in the moment and can advise and signpost to any external support. You can find out more on the [NT Hub here](#). They can also be contacted via welfare@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Additional information

Policy Environmental Statement

The NT is committed to reducing our carbon impact by 90% with the target to achieve net-zero by 2030. Everyone at the NT can contribute to this objective in their day-to-day actions including how they apply this policy day-to-day. For example by considering the environmental impact of where you work including the impact of heating your own space at home or the transport you need to get to the NT.

You can find out more here: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us/sustainability/> Details of our in-house carbon literacy training including how to book can be found on the intranet [here](#).

People Business Partners & People Advisors contacts

Every department at the NT has a dedicated People Business Partner and a People Advisor, who can provide advice, guidance and support to anyone working at the NT

on our people policies, best practice and terms and conditions of employment. You can find a list with contact details on the NT Hub here:

<https://nthub.nationaltheatre.org.uk/page/2522>

You can also email People@nationaltheatre.org.uk and we will pass you to the right person.

Policy Amendment History

Version	Effective date	Summary of amendments	Author
4	June 2025	Policy updated to incorporate Report and Support system; grievance procedure taken out as separate document.	People Policy & Engagement Partner
3	November 2024	Definition of Bullying updated to reflect ACAS definition	People Policy & Engagement Partner
2	October 2024	Page 5 Sexual Harassment definition added in line with Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) technical guidance on sexual harassment and harassment at work.	People Policy & Engagement Partner
1	March 2024	Policy created	Director of People