



Royal Borough of Greenwich

No Platform for Hate:

Protocol to prevent speakers promoting hate and intolerance at venues within the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Introduction

The Council is committed to ensuring that our residents and visitors can attend and enjoy any venue across the borough without fear of intimidation, harassment, extremism, hateful or threatening behaviour.

Whilst the Council recognises the rights of individuals and organisations to express their opinions and views, we are equally committed to ensuring that such expression does not in any way run contrary to our commitment to promoting equality and respecting diversity, which is at the heart of our community.

This protocol seeks to provide guidance to ensure that all venues and organisers uphold a duty of care towards our residents regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, religion/belief or political opinion, by seeking to ensure that discrimination, hate and extremism are not given a platform anywhere in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Freedom of expression – what are your rights?

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.

The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health and morals, for the protection of reputation or rights for others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

Freedom of expression – limitations

Article 10 is not an absolute right, but a qualified right which means that the rights of the individual must be balanced against the interest of society.

Freedom of expression may be limited in some circumstances and in particular does not protect statements that unlawfully discriminate against or harass, or incite violence or hatred against other people and groups, particularly by reference to their race, religious belief, gender or sexual orientation.

It is an offence to stir up hatred on racial or religious grounds or on the ground of sexual orientation. Offensive or insulting language may also constitute harassment, either under the Equality Act 2010, or if directed at an individual under the Prevention of Harassment Act.

The Equality Act 2010 – what are our responsibilities?

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to give protection from discrimination, harassment or victimisation to individuals that have 'protected characteristics'. These are: sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race and disability.

The Local Authority is bound by the Public Sector Equality Act. This means we must:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The decision making process

This protocol seeks to make venues and organisers aware of the risks associated with some individuals who have previously been known to promote intolerance, hate and extremism.

Whilst each instance must be looked at on a case by case basis and on its own merits, this guidance will hopefully mitigate risk and ensure that defensible and informed decisions are made by venues and organisations (including local authorities with responsibilities for their own venues).



Who owns the venue?

Examples?

Who makes decision?

Royal Greenwich owned/managed venue	Town Hall, Council House, Park, Community Centre etc.	The Council
Royal Greenwich owned venue managed by a third party	Office, sports hall, educational venue etc	The Council in consultation with third party
Private venue	Hotel, Church, conference room, entertainment venue, school, etc	Venue management

NB: with all venue types we would encourage the venue owner to consult with the Council for advice and guidance around the proposed guest speaker before any decisions are made.

The Protocol: Making an informed decision

The following protocol should be triggered by the organiser when considering whether to host a guest speaker at any venue in the borough.



Gather Information

- Conduct open source 'due diligence' checks, using more than one search engine to prevent bias.

Assess Information

- Assess credibility of information. Is there evidence that the speaker/group has promoted messages of hate, intolerance or support of terrorism?
- Identity if speaker has been badly received or banned elsewhere.
- Consider risk in reference to community cohesion, public disorder, equality or health & safety

Consult

- Consult with the Council or relevant local support charities such as: Greenwich Inclusion Project (GrIP) or METRO GAVS to help make an informed decision regarding advice on protected characteristics and likely impact on the community.

Make Decision

- Inform the Council of the outcomes of the decision.

USEFUL CONTACTS

For more information about this protocol or if you wish to inform us about guest speakers you intend to host, please get in touch with us at:

Prevent@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Greenwich Inclusion Project: www.gripproject.org.uk

METRO GAVS: www.metrocharity.org.uk

Stop Hate UK: www.stophateuk.org