



The Place guidelines on political campaigning and activity

September 2024

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1. Introduction and key aims

This document sets out guidance from the Charity Commission on political campaigning and other political activity, and highlights key risks to be considered by charitable organisations when taking part in campaigning or other political activity. The policy also refers to other key funders and stakeholders that regulate the activity of The Place as an organisation, including Arts Council England and the Office for Students.

The core aim of this document is to ensure

- employees and trustees of The Place,
- students and faculty members of LCDS, and
- artists working with The Place's theatre and public programmes

have a good understanding of the legal position on campaigning and sight of relevant guidance issued by the Charity Commission; an understanding of the areas where political campaigning is useful and beneficial for the charity; and an understanding of potential legal and reputational risks associated with political campaigning. These guidelines apply to students, staff and contractors of The Place and artists working with The Place, when working as representatives of The Place.

Staff (such as the Artist Development and Visitor Services teams) who work with artists and external hirers should familiarise themselves with sections 8 and 9 below.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to enable The Place to:

- ensure political campaigning and political activity in person, in writing and on social media is used lawfully, reasonably, and in a manner that raises no compliance or reputational risks for The Place;
- provide a framework to facilitate consideration of the areas where The Place may wish to campaign or engage in political activity
- identify potential risks and suitable mitigations

3. Definitions

The Charity Commission defines **campaigning** as

- awareness-raising
- efforts to educate the public
- efforts to involve the public by mobilising their support on a particular issue
- efforts to influence or change public attitudes

For clarity, the Charity Commission does **not** refer to fundraising as 'campaigning' in this context.

The Charity Commission defines **political activity** as

- raising public support for policy change
- seeking to influence political parties or independent candidates, politicians or other public in support of the desired change
- responding to consultations carried out by political parties

The Charity Commission notes that there may be some overlap between campaigning and other political activity.

It is essential to note that **charities cannot give their support to a political party**. A charity may give support to a specific policy which is advocated by a political party, and which contributes to the delivery of its own charitable purposes; however a charity cannot give general support to a political party.

When planning or considering a campaign or political activity, trustees need to be clear about **how the campaign or activity will support the work of the charity** and, with that in mind, set clear and measurable objectives.

For further information, please see the following:

- Charity Commission guide to [Political activity and campaigning by charities](#)
- Arts Council England [Relationship Framework 2023-2026](#)

4. Campaigning and political activity - general principles

The charitable objects of The Place, per its Articles of Association, are *to foster, promote and increase the interest of the public in the knowledge, understanding and practice of the art of contemporary dance and to promote and assist presentation of contemporary dance and the training of contemporary dance practitioners, to promote and establish schools or colleges of contemporary dance.*

The following general principles apply to campaigning and political activity:

- A charity **can become involved in campaigning** and in political activity which further or support its charitable purposes;
- A charity **can make public comment on social, economic and political issues** and **may campaign for a change in the law** if this activity supports its own charitable purposes;
- A charity **can seek to influence government or other public bodies**, and **can support or oppose the passage of a Parliamentary Bill**, providing this activity is in support of its charitable purposes;
- A charity **may express support for policies** which will contribute to the delivery of its own charitable purposes so long as its independence is maintained;
- A charity may also speak out on issues relevant to the well-being of the wider voluntary and charitable sector.

5. Permitted activities - organisation

A brief overview of activities a charity may carry out in support of its charitable purposes is given below. For a fuller list please see the Charity Commission's guide to [Political activity and campaigning by charities](#)

- A charity **may engage with a political party** in ways that supports its own charitable purposes and **may ask representatives of all the parties what their view is on a particular issue**, while remaining politically neutral, and transparent about any contact it has with parties and representatives;
- A charity **can invite a politician to speak in support of its aims** at a meeting or event and **can have meetings with its local Member of Parliament (MP)**, local councillors or other public figures, or take part in policy discussions at a party conference;
- A charity **may publish materials** in support of its campaign and **can use social media** to engage in campaigning and political activity, as long as this is a way of achieving its charitable purpose. All materials published must be factually accurate;
- A charity **may organise events** including marches, rallies, or peaceful picketing in support of a campaign. The charity must be mindful of, and take steps to mitigate, the potential for public order offences if organising such events.

Examples of permitted activities for The Place as an organisation:

As an arts organisation with the charitable objects of promoting dance performance, production and training, as an organisation The Place **can**:

- Make statements in public and on social in support of arts education initiatives, and policies and proposed policies that support the performing arts;
- Work alongside other organisations to campaign in support of changes to arts policy;
- Invite Members of Parliament and local councillors to events produced by The Place and/or taking place in The Place building;
- Meet with Members of Parliament and local councillors to discuss policies connected to arts and arts education.

Please see section 9 below for examples connected to fundraising activity.

6. Prohibited activities - organisation

The below applies to The Place as an organisation:

- A charity **cannot undertake political activity that is not relevant to the charity's charitable purposes** and does not have a reasonable likelihood of supporting the charity's charitable purposes.
- A charity **must not give its support to any one political party**, or promote a particular candidate or political party.
- A charity **must never provide money or other resources** to political parties or to anyone who is standing as a candidate.

Examples of prohibited activities for The Place as an organisation:

As an arts organisation with the charitable objects of promoting dance performance, production and training, as an organisation The Place **cannot**:

- Make statements in public and on social in support of policies and proposed policies that are not related to the performing arts or arts education;
- Meet with Members of Parliament and local councillors to discuss policies that are not connected to arts and arts education;
- Fundraise for or donate to political parties or candidates.

7. Special considerations during general election campaigns

The following additional guidance applies during periods when a general election has been called:

- As in non-election periods, political campaigning or political activity must be undertaken by a charity **only in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purpose**;

- Charities must at all times be seen as neutral and impartial. A charity **must not give support or funding** to a political party, nor to a politician or candidate;
- A charity **may give its support to specific policies advocated by political parties** if it would help achieve its charitable purpose. The charity **must steer clear of explicitly comparing its views with those of the political parties or candidates** taking part in the election, and must not endorse a political party.
- A charity **may hire out its premises** for public meetings during election periods; a charity **may refuse to hire facilities to a candidate**, party or other group if the trustees have good reason to believe that the hire would alienate the charity's users or supporters. Please refer to [The Place Space Hire Terms and Conditions](#) when managing external space hires.

For further information on campaigning during election periods, please see [Charities and the General Election: Information for parliamentary candidates](#)

8. Individual activities

Cultural Activism is a value we promote and celebrate at The Place, and the right of staff and students at The Place, and artists working with The Place, to make public statements and campaign in support of non-arts related organisations and policies is protected by our Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom policies.

Individuals must be mindful of relevant policies including The Place Bullying and Harassment policy and Equity and inclusion principles when making public statements – see section 11 below for a list of related policies.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team should be especially mindful of reputational risk potentially attaching to the organisation from statements made in a personal capacity.

Examples of permitted activities for individuals at The Place in a personal capacity:

Staff and students at The Place and artists working with The Place can:

- Make statements in public and on social media in support of initiatives, policies and proposed policies on a broad range of themes;
- Express political opinions within the law, being mindful that lawful political expression does not include bullying and harassment;
- Work with other individuals and organisations to campaign for changes in policy;
- Organise events including protests, rallies and public meetings in support of a political campaign, being mindful that these are carried out safely and do not breach public order laws;
- Carry out fundraising activity for other recognised charities and campaign groups in an individual capacity. Please see section 9 below for examples connected to fundraising activity.

See the flowchart in Appendix 1 below for further information on individual and organisational campaigning.

9. Fundraising

The Place carries out development (fundraising) activity in support of its own operations, and may support artists or other arts organisations with wider arts fundraising initiatives. As a funded organisation, The Place does not usually fundraise for other non-arts charities, but staff and students as well as external hirers and artists working in the theatre may carry out fundraising activities for other recognised charities in their capacity as individuals.

Examples of fundraising activity include: sales of donated items (cakes, clothing); sponsored activities on or off The Place premises, and classes or ticketed events where all or a portion of money raised is donated to a recognised charity.

Space bookings for student-run fundraising events must follow the usual [rehearsal space booking procedure](#). Staff wishing to book space should contact space@theplace.org.uk. Staff and students should note that internal spaces (including studios, meeting rooms and the cafe and bar areas) may not always be available at times of high demand and priority will be given to students who require space for curriculum-based projects, or rehearsals for events such as Ideas in Action and other performance events. Please also refer to the procedures set out in The Place Freedom of Speech policy.

- Staff wishing to organise or publicise a charitable fundraising event or activity should in the first instance contact **Laura Naldrett, Head of HR** with the time and place of the activity and details of the charity;
- Students wishing to organise or publicise a charitable fundraising event or activity should in the first instance contact both their Year Group Coordinator and their Year Group Representatives with the time and place of the activity and details of the charity. Year Group Representatives should then submit a statement of support for the proposed event to the LCDS Senior Management Team (SMT). Any fundraising request will ultimately be considered for approval by the LCDS Senior Management Team (SMT).
- Artists wishing to hold a fundraising collection for a named charity during or after performances should in the first instance contact the producer or member of Artist Development staff they are working with, with details of the charity. Any request will be considered for approval by the Theatre and Artist Development (TAD) team.
- External hirers may wish to hire facilities for fundraising events (eg classes or workshops where all or a portion of money raised is donated to a recognised charity) following the usual procedure for an external space hire. External hirers wishing to book space should contact space@theplace.org.uk with details of the event and the charity. The Place **may refuse to hire facilities to an external hirer** if the trustees have good reason to believe that the hire would alienate the charity's users or supporters.

In all cases, events and collections may not proceed without first obtaining approval as outlined above.

Details of fundraising activity (including the name of the staff member, student or external hirer responsible) can be communicated via the Staff and Student News of the Week newsletters as appropriate, and on relevant physical noticeboards around the building. Print materials should not be attached to places other than designated noticeboards. All notices must follow the guidance on public notices contained in The Place Freedom of Speech policy.

Fundraising activity by individuals (including staff, students and artists) on behalf of other organisations will not usually be communicated on The Place social media.

See the flowchart in **Appendix 2** below for further information on fundraising.

10. Risks and considerations when campaigning

The Charity Commission advises all charities to consider and mitigate the following risks when choosing whether to campaign on a specific issue:

- Risk of acting outside charity's purposes
- Misuse of charity funds
- Breach of legal or good practice requirements on campaigning
- Financial risk
- Reputational risk
- Risk to independence
- Costs and benefits of campaigning
- Risk of failure to meet objectives
- Unintended consequences

Any campaigning or political activity carried out by The Place must be in support of the work of the charity, approved by the Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team, and planned with clear and measurable objectives to reduce the risks outlined above.

11. Related legislation and policies

These guidelines on campaigning and political activity should be read in conjunction with the following Place policies:

- [Freedom of Speech](#)
- [Academic Freedom](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment](#)
- [Equity and inclusion principles](#)
- [Social Media policy](#) (staff)
- [Social Media policy](#) (students)
- [Non-Academic Misconduct policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing Procedure](#)

The following legislation and guidance is also relevant:

- The [Charities Act 2006](#) governs which purposes are legally charitable;
- Article 10 of the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) protects the right to freedom of opinion and expression, while respecting other people's rights;
- The [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023](#) governs universities' duties to secure freedom of speech within the law for staff, students and visiting speakers;
- Arts Council England's [Relationship Framework 2023-2026](#) includes information about managing organisational reputational risk, and how ACE meets its own responsibilities as a funder under the [Public sector equality duty](#)
- The Advertising Standards Agency [CAP Code](#) applies to charity as well as commercial campaigns and ensures advertising materials are truthful;
- The [Communications Act 2003](#) prohibits political advertising in the broadcast media;
- Charities should be mindful of the [Defamation Act 2013](#) when producing campaigns;
- The [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005](#) places restrictions on campaigning, including demonstrations, that apply to organisations including charities;
- The [Public Order Act 1986](#) concerns violent and threatening public behaviour which charities must be mindful of if organising public protests and demonstrations
- The Charity Commission has public guidance on [complaints about a charity](#).

12. For further information

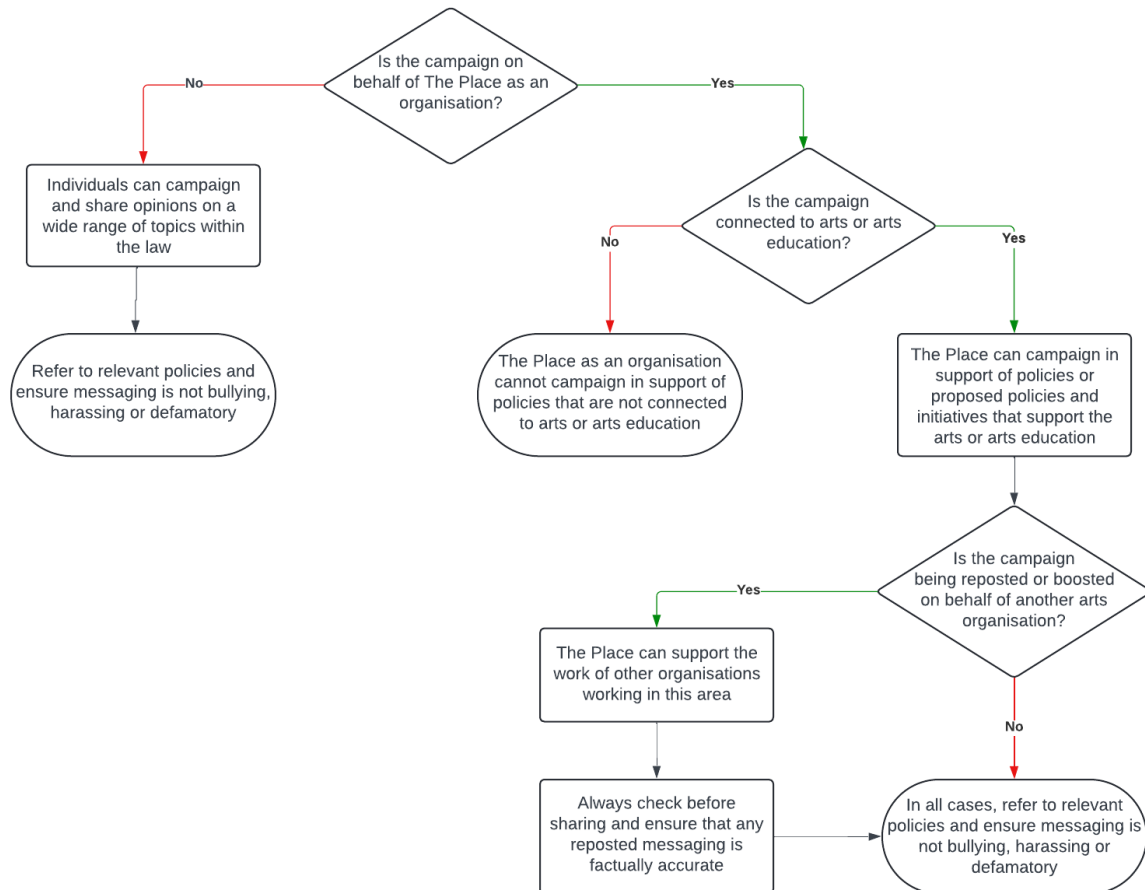
For further information and questions about this policy, or to discuss a political campaign or activity you would like to conduct in capacity as a representative of The Place, please contact:

Lise Smith, Head of Governance (lise.smith@theplace.org.uk)

Date of approval: September 2024

Date of next review: September 2026

APPENDIX 1: CAMPAIGNING FOR POLICY CHANGE, AWARENESS-RAISING AND POLITICAL MESSAGING



APPENDIX 2: FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

