

# THE OLD VIC

## THE WAY FORWARD

### Defining rights and prescribing action

We commit to creating a safe and secure working environment for all.

This requires:

- Leadership and commitment from our Board to set the tone and culture of the organisation and ensure accountability
- Thoughtful engagement from the theatre management and staff in order for solutions to be workable, and avoid negatively impacting on creative relationships
- In-depth discussion led by industry bodies and with colleagues to share learnings and best practice so that our solutions are impactful and meaningful

The Old Vic cannot change behaviours and theatre culture in isolation. Engaging with the rest of the UK theatre community and establishing practices which minimise the opportunity for inappropriate behaviour and seek to ensure that such behaviour is addressed when it occurs are key.

Creating a healthy and dignified environment in which to work is essential for every profession. It is a right that everyone should be able to reasonably expect.

### Rules and Expectations

We will develop with our people, our own set of conduct rules and behavioural expectations based around two categories of behaviour: **'OK - NOT OK'**.

Both the general life of the theatre and specifically productions will be covered. Every member of staff and member of the company and creative team will sign up to and will be encouraged to ensure that it is implemented effectively and adhered to.

It will include clear guidance regarding one-on-one meetings in isolated locations, especially outside The Old Vic building, and in particular late at night or involving alcohol.

It will include clear guidance on what to do in a circumstance that feels uncomfortable or NOT OK.

It will establish a zero tolerance policy on inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.

### Guardians

The Old Vic will establish a 'Guardians Committee'.

It will comprise a range of Board members, staff and creatives who will be responsible for upholding the policies in place, raising awareness of issues of good conduct and best practice, and leading the way for the organisation.

Guardians will be approachable, informed, responsive. They will receive additional training to support them in this role.

Any person working at The Old Vic can contact a Guardian at any point, knowing that they will be a safe point of contact for concerns or recommendations.

## **Guidance**

Additional training for all staff, including creative and production staff, will be initiated on diversity issues and acceptable workplace behaviour.

This will be designed in conjunction with the creative and production staff so that it properly takes into account the features of theatre productions at The Old Vic.

Training will demonstrate how people should speak out and report concerns quickly. It will cover boundaries and what constitutes inappropriate behaviour.

## **Accountability**

Protocols and processes will be drafted and enacted. They will not sit on a shelf. All who work here, regardless of seniority or role, will be held to them.

Some, like our Dignity at Work policy already exist. Others, like an extended whistleblowing policy will be drafted and put in place to provide a clear, formal route for incident escalation where necessary.

Specific and supportive guidance about alcohol use will be written, together with guidance on The Old Vic's expectations, all to be given without it having a 'chilling' effect on camaraderie and the creative culture, or driving performers and staff away from the bar as a place to relax post-work or show.

Clear reporting lines will be established for swift escalation of concerns. Guardians will sit alongside this to give an additional mechanism for support should a formal approach not feel right.

## **Checks and Balances**

A governance review will be undertaken to check that the programme of modernisation and improvement that has taken place since 2014 within The Old Vic Board of Trustees has gone far enough; and to ensure that it remains fully equipped to fulfil its role in providing independent oversight of The Old Vic.

Regular 360 feedback will be requested not just for permanent staff and their managers during appraisals and reviews, but within acting companies and creative teams to provide clarity around effective line management, and include confidential questions regarding culture and behaviours.

In all we do, we will strive to make The Old Vic a healthy, happy, safe place to work.