



## **Procedure for External Speakers**

### **Purpose**

To inform College staff, students external speakers and Conference Centre Clients of our procedure regarding all events involving external speakers.

### **Scope**

The procedure applies to all staff organising events, external/guest speakers and venue hire clients.

An external speaker is anyone who is not a member of staff or student of Wigan & Leigh College.

### **Responsibility**

The Designated Protection Officer will be responsible for updating the procedure.

The Head of Student Services will maintain a central register of authorised external speakers.

### **Legal Context**

The Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

### **Introduction**

Wigan & Leigh College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This procedure outlines the process relating to events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising these events. This applies, therefore, to those hiring our premises as well as our own employees.

It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of Wigan & Leigh College whilst following the legislation that we are responsible for upholding. This procedure is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

## **Objectives**

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected whilst balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that the College can meet their legal obligations
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate.
- To communicate to all staff, students, volunteers, visitors and clients that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with the PREVENT Duty and that both Wigan & Leigh College and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution

## **Freedom of speech and expression**

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Universities and Colleges have a history of being open to debate and ideas, with students actively involved in pushing the limits of freedom of expression. 'Academic freedom' is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context.

However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. We want all of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe, without risk to the College, and within the law.

If an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event, we are committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a decision that is reasonable, informed and within the law

## **External speakers and their responsibilities**

The term 'external speaker' is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of Wigan & Leigh College and who has been invited to speak to students and/or staff, or delegates attending a conference in our conference centre facility or in another college room.

This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use College facilities.

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on Wigan & Leigh College premises or where Wigan & Leigh College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair.

- It includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film of the speaker is shown.
- It also includes activity being held on Wigan & Leigh College premises but organised by external venue hire clients.

All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this procedure on the College website) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the College's procedures including:-

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of a Vice Principal of the College.

### **Quick Process Guide**

1. External speaker identified
2. Member of staff researches the external speaker / organisation for suitability
3. Member of staff completes External Speaker Form (Appendix 1) and forwards to the Head of Department at least 14 days before the event. Member of staff cannot confirm a booking until approval is received from the Head of Department.
4. Head of Department checks the form and approves or refers to an Assistant Principal and/or Safeguarding Team for further consultation on the decision.
5. The outcome of this is communicated to the member of staff making the request. The member of staff must inform the speaker about this procedure and direct them to the College website to read it.
6. External Speaker Forms (Appendix 1) must be signed by the Head of Department. Where a referral for a decision has been undertaken then the following must also be recorded:-
  - Names of staff members involved in the consultation
  - Issues considered
  - Outcome
  - Any restrictions applied where the event goes ahead.
7. Completed forms are returned to Student Services to be held on a central record.

## **Guidance for Wigan & Leigh College staff and students organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client**

- Heads of Department or the relevant Assistant Principal must be informed of any events that involve external speakers through this procedure.
- No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the process detailed in this procedure. This includes advertisement through any social media platform.
- Wigan & Leigh College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the procedure is not followed or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.
- Any room booking/ event organisation with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- The individual/group organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, then they should refer to the Head of Department or Assistant Principal for a decision. Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following: -
  - any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terrorgroups-or-organisations--2> ;
  - talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist;
  - a speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff;
  - a speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial;
  - a link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature;
  - a speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues;
  - a speaker from a political party during an election purdah (usually the time period between the start of an election campaign and the polling day).

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation;
- independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge
- the view being held

In making recommendations, a Head of Department or Assistant Principal may consult on a wider basis with the College's Safeguarding team and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

1. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech
2. The potential for the event going ahead to cause risk to the College reputation
3. The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff and/or to give rise to a breach of peace.

The Request for Prior Approval for an External Speaker (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the relevant Head of Department no later than 14 days before the planned event. Once a decision has been made, the completed form should be forwarded to Student Services for logging on the Central Record.

Members of the College Management Team are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support this procedure.

### **Additional Guidance for Venue Hire Clients organising an event with external Speakers**

The Head of Innovation and Development will make external venue hire clients aware of this procedure and request details of any external speakers, presentations etc that they are bringing in. This information should be provided no later than 14 days before the booking goes ahead.

Wigan & Leigh College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Head of Innovation and Development will refer to the Vice Principal for Business Services for a decision. Reasons may be as outlined above.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

## Appendix 1 - REQUEST FOR PRIOR APPROVAL FOR AN EXTERNAL SPEAKER

The organising Tutor or Client requesting participation of an external speaker must complete this form and submit it to the Head of Department at least **14 days** prior to the visit by the external speaker. Where a Head of Department is originating the request it should be submitted to an Assistant or Vice Principal for approval.

Name of person submitting this request										
Curriculum Area/ Department		Site of Activity or Event	PF		PW		WSA			
			IC		Leigh Centre					
Date of Request										
Name of Activity or Event										
Scheduled Date for Speaker		Time(s)								
Name(s) of Speaker(s)										
Organisation Represented (where applicable)										
Topic of Speaker										
Qualification of Speaker to address this topic										
Is there any known or likely media interest in this event?			Yes		No					
Have adequate checks been carried out?	Yes		Details							
	No									
Have the Marketing Team been informed of this event?			Yes		No					
Prior Approval Granted			Yes		No					
Prior Approval Denied			Yes		No					
Name of Head of Department / Assistant Principal										
Signature										
Date										

**If a referral is required for this decision please attach details of this process.**

**Please return this completed and signed form to Student Services**