

External Speakers Policy

Freedom of 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. Providers have a history of being open to debate and ideas with students at the forefront of 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 reputation of Stanfords Training; and within the law.

Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event. Stanfords Training is committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law. In addition, all events and external speakers must comply with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that no learner, member of staff, or visitor is discriminated against based on any protected characteristic. Stanfords Training promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in all activities and expects visiting speakers to uphold these values.

External Speakers and their Responsibilities

An external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member for Stanfords or one of its contracted partners and who has been invited to speak to learners and/or staff. This includes any individual who is a learners or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use provider facilities.

Event

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a learner group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on the Stanford Training premises or where Stanford Training Centre is being represented by a stand on non-Centre premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown.

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

- 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 Stanford Training (available Safeguarding Lead)

All visiting speakers and external guests must understand that their activities must be conducted in accordance with the Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, updated 2023). They must cooperate with any reasonable requests made by Stanfords Training to ensure events remain compliant with safeguarding, health and safety, and Prevent legislation.

Subcontracted training providers, delivery partners, and any organisation representing Stanfords Training at an external event must adopt and implement this policy in full when inviting speakers or delivering public sessions.

Venue Hire and External Speakers

The Stanford Training staff will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations or any other material that they are bringing in. This information should be provided no later than 12 days before the booking goes ahead.

Stanfords Training reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information is not provided, or if health, safety, safeguarding, or security criteria cannot be met.

All external venue hire clients must also comply with the Prevent Duty and Equality Act 2010. Any concerns identified will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to approval.

Assessing the Suitability of Speakers

If there is any doubt regarding the suitability of an external speaker, decisions will be based on the following considerations:

- Any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations
- Affiliation with groups generally considered 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.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for reviewing and approving external speakers. All final decisions, risk assessments, and agreed control measures must be

recorded in the Prevent risk register or safeguarding log. Records will be retained in accordance with the centre's data protection policy.

Decision Making

- 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.

All decisions regarding the approval or refusal of an external speaker must be documented and retained for quality assurance purposes. The Safeguarding Lead will review this process annually as part of the Prevent and safeguarding policy review.

Prevent and Safeguarding Contacts

Any concerns about an external speaker, event, or potential Prevent issue must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will follow the Prevent Duty statutory guidance (2023) and local authority referral pathways.

Internal Contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Lead – 0121 633 8100 (David Nicol)

Safeguarding Advisor – 07498 322823 (Akila Sharif)

External Contacts for Advice and Support:

Birmingham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – 0121 303 1888

Police (Prevent Officer) – via 101 or the local Prevent coordination team

Policy Date: 01/11/2025

Next Review Date: 31/10/2026



Signed:

