



stage  
directors uk

→ **directing  
best  
practice**

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# introduction ↓

In this strange post-truth era, when 'snowflakes' are accused of being too sensitive, whilst stories of abuses of power are rife, SDUK thought it timely to offer director-specific guidance across a whole range of industry issues. We're told over and over again by members, that they need more transparency in recruitment processes, more protection as freelancers, more understanding as parents or carers, more compassion for disability and chronic illness, and that industry doors are closed to all but a select, privileged few. Marginalised and minority groups are excluded, majority groups are called out for their privilege. What is the appropriate response? How do we work more inclusively? Who do we turn to when we've had a bad experience? What is best practice?

The answer has to be collective, collaborative, collegiate. This is why we've opened up this guide to a variety of sources, industry friends and colleagues. We don't want to reinvent the wheel, and when there's great guidance already in existence, it's our job to pull it together into something relevant to SDUK members, and to 'weed out' what doesn't fit for working directors. We're hugely grateful to all of our contributors for their wisdom and expertise.

We've tried to address the key topics that keep coming up and are asked about most often by members. This guide is not exhaustive. It is also not informative exclusively to directors. We hope that venues, companies and producers employing directors will also learn much from this guide about safeguarding the interests and wellbeing of those they work with.

**Liz Holmes**  
General Manager

# guide lines for recruiting directors ↓

## advertise. be honest. be open minded.

One of the main concerns our members frequently raise, is the lack of transparency and clear process in the recruitment of Directors across the spectrum of experience. From emerging and early-career Directors, to the Artistic Directors of major houses. From work in outreach and community, to drama schools and higher education, we receive many complaints about the impropriety and lack of clarity of companies' recruitment processes. A lot of the ideas and suggestions below were offered by SDUK members.

We hope that this guide will help organisations to ensure that the recruitment of Directors (particularly freelancers) is as rigorous, and with as much of a moral obligation to 'get it right' as recruiting permanent members of staff.

## the elephant in the room

Far and away the most frequently asked question is "WHERE ARE ALL THE JOBS?" – how do Directors get a foot in the door? Who do they approach with ideas? We know that this industry forms creative partnerships and kinships, and that organisations like to stick to artistic combinations they know will be successful, but we also know that doing so drastically narrows the pool of available talent. It continues the travesty of 'not what you know but who you know' and nepotism. It keeps the industry closed to amazing talent.

SDUK actively encourages organisations to push the boundaries of institutional familiarity when hiring artistic and creative staff. Look for someone new. Someone very unlike the last person. Someone very unlike you.

## if you need a director – advertise!!

There are obviously jobs out there. Some Directors are obviously working. But large numbers report they rarely see anything advertised.

### **Be brave and go public!**

Some key things that ALL recruiting companies should consider:

- If you don't advertise your vacancies – explain why not on your website
- Explain how Directors make themselves known to you
- Do you accept unsolicited CVs or approaches? To whom and where should they be addressed? Make this info available publicly (website, social media etc)
- Do you go to see invited works, how do directors invite you?
- Can Directors pitch ideas to you? How? To whom? What reassurances can you offer that their ideas won't be appropriated?
- How do people get their foot in the door with your company? If it's through pre-existing contacts or meetings, be brave enough to say so, and tell them how they can achieve a meeting
- Consider publishing a list of future productions without attached Directors, so that people can specifically approach you for these roles

## ideas for job advertising/info packs:

- Advertise with a good turnaround time – a couple of weeks before the show starts rehearsal is too little time – 6 weeks plus is recommended
- State the fee – the actual fee – not just “Equity minimum”. Expect to be challenged on that. SDUK has made industry ‘going rates’ very public – our members know their fee expectations!
- If the fee is unconfirmed/subject to funding, explain that. Confirm what fee has been applied for, and when the funding decision is expected
- State expenses, subsistence and per diems



- State whether the fee is to cover preparation and/or production meetings, castings etc in advance of rehearsals. If not, state the fee for these extra days' work
- If the job is unpaid (we understand, but can't encourage this), state that it is unpaid. Justify that. Expect negative responses, but own your reasons for the decision
- If the job is profit-share, confirm that you will have an 'open books' policy in place so that all financial transactions are known by all members of the team
- Be exact with dates and times of work (e.g. full-time days, or evenings and weekends). If any dates are unconfirmed, say so. Be clear that you're open to discussions about flexible working hours to accommodate family life, those with disabilities and other requirements
- Be absolutely explicit about the sort of director you're looking for? What experience do you want them to have? What sorts of venues? Which shows?
- Be specific about the show (if known) – if it involves a community chorus, or horses, or aerial work, for example – say so!
- State the locality – if you're rehearsing and performing locally, and want a local director – say so. If you're considering applicants from outside that area, say so (and confirm relocation expenses)

## ideas for the application process:

- If possible, state when the interview date will be so that candidates can plan work around it
- Consider whether your standard application process is suitable/adequate for a Director to shoe-horn their skills and experience into. Creative roles don't often fit standardised forms – being asked your 'reasons for leaving job' gets pretty tedious for those who work fixed-term contracts!
- Consider asking for a CV plus role-specific questions for applicants to answer, rather than a blanket open statement
- If you offer alternative means of application for those with access needs on permanent staff, offer it to freelancers too

- Always acknowledge receipt of applications! Don't use the excuse that you received too many to do so
- Inform unsuccessful applicants of the fact – particularly if you've stated an interview date. Respect the time and effort Directors have put into wanting to work with you. It is a minor moment of admin that means a great deal to applicants. Let them know #YesOrNo
- Consider that requiring lengthy and complicated information on the application form will also narrow the pool of talent to those that have the time and aptitude for that sort of form. Consider that many directors have alternative jobs, families and other life commitments, or processing difficulties that mean taking many hours to complete an application is impossible
- If you DO want more information, consider a 2-stage application process. Start with CV and covering letter, followed by more specific statements of interest and experience from the candidates you're interested in

## ideas for interviews:

- Inform the candidate beforehand how many people, and who, will be on the panel
- Offer travel expenses to interview
- If a workshop audition/interview – pay the director for their time and give them enough time before the date to adequately prepare. Tell them who they'll be working with, and for how long
- If you guarantee interviews for minority groups to improve the diversity of your permanent staff team, do the same for freelancers
- If creative/production team are already in place, discuss this. Or discuss how the candidate will form their creative team
- If the project contains intimate or difficult content, stunts, fights, circus etc, be sure to discuss these elements in interview
- Offer constructive feedback to unsuccessful interviewees that doesn't include "do some more voluntary or low/no pay work"!



## ideas for making job offers:

- Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities, line management, company policies and procedures regarding queries, complaints and concerns
- Confirm the fee and time commitment, payment schedule of fees and expenses, finance staff contacts
- Confirm the production team involved, or budget to bring them in (and level of autonomy to do so)

## a final but sensitive point:

You are not entitled to receive gratitude from your appointed Director for you having provided them a job. You are hiring someone because their skills and experience are right for the job, or because you wish to help someone develop those skills and experience. No one should ever be made to feel they're 'lucky' to be offered the experience, or have to work above and beyond the call of duty, or for no pay because they will get 'exposure.' Just don't do it. It's tacky, it undermines, and means a working relationship cannot be truly collaborative.

Liz Holmes, July 2019

**“** *It feels like I am either too experienced, or not experienced enough, or 'too old' for most of the opportunities I am made aware of.*

SDUK member

**”**



## the casting process

The following is reproduced from Equity's Manifesto for Casting

Too often, talented people aren't cast in roles they would be perfect for. They aren't given enough notice before an audition to secure childcare. They can't afford to travel to meet the casting director. They physically can't access an audition space.

This is all preventable. We are seeking to change the audition process, and ensure good practice principles are adopted which ensure that casting is fairer, clearer, less stressful and more inclusive for all. That's why we have created the Manifesto for Casting.

The manifesto seeks to give all talented performers a chance to excel, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or socioeconomic background. It also underscores that actors should not be forced to move to London to pursue their careers, or give up their ambitions when they assume caring responsibilities.

We need to widen the net and open up opportunities for all parties: performers, casting directors, agents and audiences.

Equity's General Secretary Christine Payne said: "Our industries will only thrive by attracting and retaining professional talent, regardless of background or circumstances, to meet the ever growing demands for audio and audio-visual creative content on stage, on screen, online and on demand. This manifesto will be used by the union to seek the changes that will ensure the continued success of our creative industries."

SDUK endorses Equity's creation of The Manifesto to seek the changes that will ensure the continued success of our creative industries.

## casting preparation

### job advertisements

- Where roles are advertised, the casting breakdown should be presented in the most inclusive way possible

### inclusive casting

- A diverse range of performers should be auditioned for every production, including voice-only performances. Greater consideration should be given to specific characteristics for any given role

### local talent

- Consideration should be given to professional talent from where the production is made

### access

- The building where auditions are held should be accessible and reasonable adjustments (a legal requirement) should be made to the audition process to ensure all performers can participate

## before the audition

### submissions

- Submissions made should be relevant to the role and performers' information should be up-to-date

### access

- A question requesting the access requirements of performers should be included in every invitation to audition

### nudity/simulated sex

- No sex act should be requested at any audition A performer should not be requested to undress in whole or in part unless a mutually agreed observer is present

### professionalism

- Equity members have a responsibility to turn up on time, be prepared and give the earliest possible notice of cancellation
- All involved in the casting process have a responsibility to ensure performers are given the opportunity to prepare and give of their best

### **preparation time**

- Castings should be planned, where possible, with a realistic time frame to allow casting directors and agents enough time to enable performers to prepare properly

### **cost**

- Reasonable consideration should be given to the cost to performers when attending auditions

### **caring responsibilities**

- The caring responsibilities of performers should be recognised and, wherever practicable, accommodated

## **at the audition**

### **self-taping**

- Performers should be given clear direction on what is required and a realistic time frame. There should also be a timely acknowledgment of its receipt

### **time keeping**

- Every attempt should be made by all concerned to keep to the agreed audition time

### **data protection**

- Information provided on the head sheet or the artist declaration form or equivalent must be treated in accordance with data protection law

### **appropriate questions**

- In line with the law and with specific exceptions, performers should not be asked for personal information, verbally or in writing, as part of the audition. This includes actual age, ethnicity, disability, pregnancy, marital/civil partnership status or sexual orientation

### **filming auditions**

- If an audition is to be filmed, the film (or self-tape) should not be used or distributed for any other purpose without the consent of the performer



## after the audition

### outcome

- Performers/Agents should be informed when they have not got a role at the earliest opportunity

### pencilling

- A pencil is not a firm booking. All parties should be clear about the number of performers pencilled and the time frame for a decision to be made. A pencil can be withdrawn by performers or agents without repercussions. Notice of withdrawal of a pencil by any party should be given as soon as possible

### recalls

- All those who are essential to casting decisions should work with performers to minimise the number of recalls

**“** *The actor has given you their time in the day and possibly taken time off work to be there. They deserve at the very least your full enthusiasm and attention during an audition.*

SDUK member

**”**

# a guide to being paid & paying others

Prepared by Creative Juice [www.creativejuice.co.uk](http://www.creativejuice.co.uk)

## being paid ↓

**Ensure you have a contract which includes details of when and how you will receive payment**

Ensure you feel happy that the payment terms being offered are fair:

- If you're agreeing to direct a production, you should expect your fee to be made in instalments, for example, one third on signature of the agreement, one third on the first day of rehearsals and one third on the opening night
- Ideally, the instalments will reflect when you are completing the work; it's worth thinking whether, at any point during the contract, you will have completed a larger proportion of the work than you will have received in instalments of the fee
- If fair payment terms are in place, you are helping to limit your potential financial loss in the event that the entity engaging you gets into financial difficulties and is unable to pay you; you should avoid a situation where you have completed an entire contract and then receive no payment

**When contemplating entering into a contract, it might be worth completing your own due diligence on your prospective employer/client:**

- Does the contracting entity appear professional?
- Have you or trusted associates worked for the contracting entity previously?
- Is the contracting entity registered with Companies House ([www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)) and, if so, do records show a good record of



trading? It's not unusual for new companies to be established for new projects but beware that, if a company is new and has no assets, it makes it less likely that you will be paid if the project has financial difficulties

- Does the contracting entity have confirmed funding from a reputable source? Otherwise, has the contracting entity confirmed with you that all necessary funding is in place?
- Is the contracting entity a member of a recognised industry body such as SOLT, UK Theatre or ITC?
- Are there any negative news stories online about the contracting entity or its directors/employees?
- If you are worried about the contracting entity, have you discussed your situation with Stage Directors UK or Equity who may have knowledge of the entity's previous activities
- You may be happy to take the risk of working for a contracting entity that does not have a track record or any assets – that's fine but it's always a good idea to consider and be comfortable with the risks before entering into an agreement
- It's worth being proactive in completing your due diligence before entering into an agreement because, although there are ways to recover unpaid debts, if the contracting entity has no assets and is insolvent, it's unlikely that you will be able to recover your debt

#### **Consider whether you feel you should be employed or self-employed:**

- If you believe your engagement is being treated incorrectly, speak to your prospective employer/client

#### **Increase your chances of being paid on time:**

- Confirm to whom invoices should be sent
- Send invoices in the correct format
- Send invoices in good time, ahead of due dates
- If you're worried that you're going to be too busy to send invoices during a project, send them in advance
- If you are too busy to send an invoice, ask a trusted friend/relation/accountant to send for you

- Use an accounting package which automatically sends clients reminders about unpaid invoices (or you can manually send reminders)

### **Ensure you check your bank account and outstanding invoices regularly so that you can chase for late payments**

If you've not been paid and email reminders are being ignored:

- Try to speak to the employer/client as you are likely to receive a more comprehensive and helpful response if you speak on the phone or face-to-face
- Ask other employees/contractors if they have received payment from the employer/client
- You can threaten to charge interest (details of what you can charge are detailed at: <https://www.gov.uk/late-commercial-payments-interest-debt-recovery>)
- If you feel uncomfortable chasing a debt, ask a trusted friend/relation/accountant/SDUK to try chasing up for you instead

### **Always ensure invoices include the following:**

- Client's name and address of the client
- Supplier's name and address (and, if relevant, their VAT number)
- Unique invoice number from the supplier
- Invoice date
- Due date
- Description of the services/products being charged
- Supplier bank details
- Optional: Clients may wish to request that suppliers who are individuals include their Unique Tax References and confirmation that they are responsible for paying their own income tax and making their own National Insurance contributions



**If you are registered for VAT, ensure that your employer/client is aware and that your contract is clear whether your payments are inclusive or exclusive of VAT**

# paying others ↓

## Ensure you have issued a contract which includes details of when and how you will make payment

Ensure you feel happy that the payment terms you are offering are:

- Fair
- Affordable
- Reflect when the individual will be completing the work
- Allow for you to ensure you are satisfied that work has been completed before making 100% of the payment due

## When contemplating entering into a contract, give careful consideration as to whether the individual you are engaging should be treated as employed or self-employed (and therefore paid through payroll or on invoice):

- Creatives (including directors), actors, stage managers and musicians are generally treated as self-employed for tax purposes and paid on invoice
- Other individuals may need to be employed and paid through payroll
- Even individuals, such as actors, who are self-employed for tax purposes may have worker rights such as being eligible to join a workplace pension scheme
- More guidance about how to treat those you are engaging can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-status>; remember that you must make the decision as to whether an individual should be treated as employed or self-employed based on the work being carried out and that the individual's preference or past employment history is not relevant
- More guidance about your responsibilities as an employer can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-ready-to-employ-someone>; it is always best to consider your responsibilities in advance and ensure you are set-up ready to meet your obligations



### **Increase your chances of paying on time:**

- Confirm to which address you would like invoices sent; it might be worth setting-up a dedicated mailbox so that invoices are not lost amongst other emails
- Ask for invoices to be sent in the correct format
- Ask that invoices are sent in good time ahead of due dates and maybe let individuals know how long you are likely to take paying an invoice (e.g. you complete fortnightly payment runs)
- Think about when you are going to need to pay invoices and run payroll and ensure that you have the time to complete the actions when necessary (or arrange for someone else to complete this work for you)
- Be clear on how to use your banking facilities and how long it will take payments to reach your suppliers'/employees' bank accounts
- Use an accounting package to keep track of which invoices are due and to ensure payroll is managed smoothly

### **If you are an organisation, consider the process for checking payroll and invoices and how bank payments will be authorised to limit the chances of fraud and errors**

- Ideally, introduce dual authority on your online banking so that one person can set-up the payments

### **If you're having trouble meeting payment terms:**

- Be proactive and communicate with your suppliers/employees; ignoring chasing emails and calls is unlikely to be to your benefit and is not fair to your creditors
- If you are in financial difficulties, seek advice early; there are certain practices that you should avoid such as insolvent trading or offering preferential treatment for particular unsecured creditors



**Always ensure invoices include the following:**

- Client's name and address of the client
- Supplier's name and address (and, if relevant, their VAT number)
- Unique invoice number from the supplier
- Invoice date
- Due date
- Description of the services/products being charged
- Supplier bank details
- Optional: Clients may wish to request that suppliers who are individuals include their Unique Tax References and confirmation that they are responsible for paying their own income tax and making their own National Insurance contributions



**If you are not registered for VAT, check whether your suppliers/employees are registered for VAT and ensure that the contract you issue is clear whether payments are inclusive or exclusive of VAT**

## diversity & unconscious bias ↓

'Diversity' is a much-used word in the arts, there are numerous schemes and initiatives to increase access to the industry, but yet the public face of theatre does not reflect the demographic of the country we live in. There's a wealth of talent available to us, if we only look further than our own reflections. Unconscious Bias clouds our view while casting, recruiting directors and developing new work.

The following information was taken from 2 sources; Arts Council England, and ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). While their text is very business-based, administrative role-orientated, it takes only a small shift in vocabulary to see that these ideas and issues are transferable to employing directors, assistants, creative teams, and in casting performers. For 'Manager' read producer or venue, for 'candidate' think auditionee, for 'panel' imagine yourself plus casting director or assistant director in the audition room, etc.

“ Are we about ready to throw the words 'diverse' and 'diversity' in the bin? It only ever sounds like the white straight norm has deigned to diversify their interests. I vote for 'inclusion,' to reflect that our peoples and histories have previously been (un/consciously) excluded.

SDUK Member



## what is unconscious bias?

ACAS states that: unconscious bias occurs when people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. For example, a person may be drawn to someone with a similar educational background, from the same area, or who is the same colour or ethnicity as them.

A manager who wasn't successful at school may listen to, or be supportive of, an employee who left school without qualifications because, subconsciously, they are reminded of their younger self. The same can be true of a manager who is educated to degree level, favouring employees who have also been to university. This is known as affinity bias, because they feel an affinity with the person as they have similar life experiences.

Another form of unconscious bias is known as the halo effect. This is where a positive trait is transferred onto a person without anything really being known about that person. For example, those who dress conservatively are often seen as more capable in an office environment, based purely on their attire.

Behaviour which reinforces the bias is noticed whilst behaviour which does not is ignored. This is how decisions based on unconscious bias are justified.

Everyone has unconscious biases. The brain receives information all the time from our own experiences and what we read, hear or see in the media and from others. The brain uses shortcuts to speed up decision-making and unconscious bias is a by-product. There are times when this sort of quick decision making is useful, for example if faced with a dangerous situation, however it is not a good way to make decisions when dealing with recruiting or promoting staff.

## key points

- **It's natural**
- **It's unintended**
- **It can affect decisions**
- **It can be mitigated**

Unconscious bias at work can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion, staff development and recognition and can lead to a less diverse workforce. Employers can overlook talented workers and instead favour those who share their own characteristics or views.

Where unconscious bias is against a protected characteristic, it can be discriminatory. For example, if during a recruitment process an employer ignores the skills and experience of a candidate who is a different race than them and appoints another candidate who is the same race, this could be discriminatory.

Conscious thoughts are controlled and well-reasoned. Unconscious thoughts can be based on stereotypes and prejudices that we may not even realise we have. Stereotypes surrounding tattoos may subconsciously suggest a person is unlikely to conform and follow rules. Stereotypes surrounding mothers may lead to unconscious bias against women who apply for a role which involves regular travel away from home.

Stress or tiredness may increase the likelihood of decisions based on unconscious bias.

## how to overcome unconscious bias

- Be aware of unconscious bias
- Don't rush decisions rather take your time and consider issues properly
- Justify decisions by evidence and record the reasons for your decisions, for example during a recruitment exercise
- Try to work with a wider range of people and get to know them as individuals. This could include working with different teams or colleagues based in a different location
- Focus on the positive behaviour of people and not negative stereotypes
- Employers should implement policies and procedures which limit the influence of individual characteristics and preferences





Arts Council England have kindly allowed us to reproduce 'How to Recruit Diverse Talent – A culture change guide' from which, the following is taken:

## what can you do to recruit diverse talent?

- Diversify-proof HR policies and procedures
- Advertise posts including freelance roles
- Advise recruitment companies of your ambition to diversify your organisation
- Reach diverse candidates by communicating opportunities in different methods such as partnering with suitable educational institutions and/or local communities
- Consider creating job entry roles with a defined career path
- Determine relevant experience required for the role and remove timeframes for work experience from person specifications
- Place further emphasis on transferable skills within person specifications and consider non-degree holders
- Remove bias from the shortlisting and selection process
- Provide fair pay and remuneration and consider additional rewards such as lunch or childcare vouchers
- Become transparent in advertising salary/fee levels

## removing bias from shortlisting and selection process

- Separate personal detail from application forms/CVs before shortlisting
- Disregard information that is not related to the selection criteria
- Shortlist disabled applicants and those from other minority groups who meet the minimum selection criteria (decide in advance what this will be)
- Allocate enough time for shortlisting
- Use a diverse panel
- Ask questions related only to the selection criteria
- Elicit specific information
- Raise awareness of unconscious bias
- Remove factors affecting judgement:
  - Stereotyping
  - Remembering the negatives
  - Personal liking bias
  - Power difference between decision makers/panel
  - Reading too much into nervousness at interview



# **disability: inclusion, acceptance and understanding** ↓

## **interacting with disabled people during rehearsals and performances**

Disability can be visible or invisible, so you may or may not be able to see it and know about it. Someone with a disability will have some type of impairment, which can include: impaired mobility, dexterity, hearing, sight, hearing and sight, speech, an intellectual and cognitive impairment and long term illnesses both physical and mental. However, despite their impairment, they may still be able to take part and participate in various aspects of life with the right support and Reasonable Adjustments.

They are an equal individual in their own right regardless of their impairments and they need to have equal opportunity and equal access to everyday aspects of life. It is important to remember that it is not a case of treating everyone the same, but rather about encouraging and supporting accessibility and being flexible both as individuals and organisations.

Disabled people are able to participate in a wide variety of everyday activities and society providing they have the support, equipment and Reasonable Adjustments that they require to take part in different situations including rehearsals and performances.



## **general points to consider when interacting with disabled people during rehearsals and performances**

- Talk to and check with the individual what they require in order to take part in rehearsals and performances
- Speak to and include disabled people in conversations - even if they have an Interpreter with them, it is important to remember that you are talking directly to that person and the Interpreter is simply there to provide communication support
- Check that the communication is working at all times
- They may need reduced rehearsal and/or performing hours
- They may need extra one-to-one time to understand and fully participate in rehearsals and performances
- They may need extra breaks and access to rest facilities
- Spacious changing facilities, particularly if they have a support worker and/or assistance dog with them
- If possible, good and extra lighting, acoustics, colour contrast and tactile indication

## **working and communicating with wheelchair users during rehearsals and performances**

- Think of a wheelchair as part of someone's intimate personal space, it is important to try not to touch, lean on or wheel someone using a wheelchair unless they ask and require you to do this
- Try to ensure that you are communicating at an equal physical level - bend down, kneel, sit etc. This will help you both feel equal and minimise any feelings of inferiority between both of you



## working and communicating with deaf and hearing impaired D/deaf people during rehearsals and performances

- Ensure you have a D/deaf or hearing impaired person's attention before communicating with them - waving at them, turning a light immediately off and on or stamping your foot twice
- Ensure you are facing towards them with good light and ensure you are not in silhouette
- Use clear lip patterns and ensure your top lip moves
- Good pace and rhythm of speech
- Do not shout or over exaggerate words
- Only repeat the word twice
- If they still do not understand the word, then rephrase it and say it a different way
- If possible, wear plain clothing and have plain backgrounds
- Be aware of piercings, beards and moustaches and anything else that may cover your face or affect your lip pattern being clearly and easily seen by the D/deaf or hearing impaired person
- Minimise visual and auditory distractions
- Ensure there is an induction loop or infra-red system installed and working
- Ensure there is access to a textphone, SMS text and/or email for contact between and on the day of rehearsals and performances
- Hearing Dogs for D/deaf and hearing impaired people wear burgundy jackets

## **working and communicating with blind, visually impaired and deafblind people during rehearsals and performances**

- Touch a blind, visually impaired or deafblind person on their shoulder to let them know you are there
- Deafblind people will tell you how they communicate, as they use many different methods of communication
- White cane or a Guide Dog with a white harness means someone is blind or visually impaired
- Red and white cane or a Guide Dog harness with red and white check on it means that someone is deafblind
- Ensure they know who you are by saying your name
- Ensure they know who is in the room
- Ensure there are not obstacles everywhere
- Ensure they know their environment and where people and items are in it to enable them to move around safely
- Ensure they have landmarks to enable them to find their position of where they need to be during rehearsals and performances

## **provision of information in all formats for rehearsals and performances:**

- D/deaf, hearing impaired, blind, visually impaired and deafblind people may need information and scripts in alternative formats
- Large print and different colour paper - check with them preferred size and style of font and colour paper
- Braille
- Moon
- Audio
- British Sign Language (BSL) and subtitled videos



## access to and working with interpreters and other communication professionals:

- Check with the person which type of Interpreter or communication professional they require. There are different Interpreters and communication professionals, which include: BSL/English Interpreter, Deafblind Manual Interpreter, Lipspeaker, Electronic and Manual Notetakers and Speech-to Text Reporters
- Interpreters and Communicational Professionals are all fully qualified and registered with the National Register of Communication Professionals for Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD)
- If you need to find and book an Interpreter or Communication Professional, then check the NRCPD register
- Ensure you give Interpreters and/or Communication Professionals written information prior to the rehearsals and performances
- Take turns and ensure there is only one person speaking at a time
- Ensure Interpreters and/or Communication Professionals have regular breaks
- If the rehearsal or performance is more than 2 hours, then you may need 2 Interpreters and/or Communication Professionals

## assistance dogs

- Assistance Dogs are allowed in all venues
- Do not distract, stroke, touch, talk to or get eye contact with an assistance dog - this can put both the person and assistance dog in danger
- Do not feed an assistance dog



**Disability: inclusion, acceptance and understanding  
was written by [Lucy Jaques](#)**

Lucy is deafblind. She runs her own company providing a range of services including:

- **Awareness Training - Diversity, Disability, D/deaf, Visually Impaired and Deafblind Awareness**
- **Braille and Large Print Transcription Service**
- **Specialist Qualifications for Working with D/deaf and Deafblind People**
- **Disability Access Consultancy**

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# self-care: protecting mental health and wellbeing ↓

## wellbeing for directors by wellbeing for the arts

We understand the importance of directors being able to provide a safe space for actors to express themselves however we are often left thinking 'what about the director?'

Many directors feel they have a responsibility of care towards their cast, so we have put together the **Five Steps to Wellbeing** that, having been researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation, can really help to boost our mental wellbeing. We want to ensure directors in our industry are taking care of themselves first.

**connect**

**be active**

**keep learning**

**give to others**

**be mindful**

We have developed some tips and techniques specifically designed for directors in the arts industry that relate to these main points

### **connect**

It's often very easy to let work take over our lives, especially when you are self-employed and feel like you must work a lot of hours to ensure your income is at a certain level. Adding other pressures such as health concerns, family life, self-care and even just looking after your home can exacerbate the feeling of stress and disconnection with others. As social animals, humans are built to connect and live in groups and working

long hours leading to missing out on connection with others can leave us feeling lonely, stressed and isolated, which in turn negatively affects our mental health.

### **what can I do?**

We recommend using group meetings set up by SDUK and other organisations to help connect you with like-minded people, other directors that are experiencing the same difficulties (and triumphs) you are.

Online support and counselling are offered by organisations such as The Samaritans and MIND and are not just for people in crisis. They offer a connection with another person which can be used to offload worries and gain perspective on any difficult situations – both services are free.

We suggest setting aside at least one meeting a week that is not related to work that is with another person that you trust, feel connected too and can talk openly with. Decide between you that this is your 'connection time,' make a conscious choice that you both (or more than two people) are there to connect – that is it. Sometimes we meet friends and, we don't go any deeper than we would with colleagues. Taking this time to consciously connect with another person you trust can really help develop a sense of deep trust and safety. We suggest having a few questions or topics that will promote truthful and openhearted discussion. Make it a weekly thing.

Through connection we feel like we can offload, open-up and feel like we are part of a community.

### **be active**

The positive health benefits for keeping active have been scientifically proven over and over again and it really does help boost positive mental health. When we move our bodies we shift energy, release feel good hormones and just feel better. However, it doesn't need to be particularly intense exercise for you to feel great - slower-paced activities, such as walking can still have a positive impact on our mental health. Getting off the bus/tube one stop earlier or going for a walk at lunchtime or taking the stairs instead of the lift are small but achievable changes you can make today.



## what can I do?

As well as the simple suggestions mentioned above, we have tailored some gentle yoga exercises to warm the body up.

These are great to do in the morning or at the start of workshop/ rehearsal. You can do all of the below seated on a chair or a mat with the eyes closed. You could teach this at the beginning of any rehearsal period and have a different member of the team lead it on a daily basis.

**Spinal Flex** – Sit comfortably. Inhale powerfully and flex the spine forward, opening the chest, keeping the shoulders relaxed and the head straight. Do not move the head up and down. Exhale and flex the spine back. Continue rhythmically with deep breaths. As you inhale feel the energy go down the spine. Repeat for 3 minutes.

**Neck Rolls** - Inhale and stretch the head back, allowing the heart centre to lift further. Slowly rotate exhale as the head comes down in the front. Keep this movement very slow and gentle extending through the back of the neck so as not to let the neck collapse. Repeat for 3 minutes.

**Spinal Twists** - Place the hands on the shoulders, fingers in front and thumbs in back. Inhale, twist to the left. Exhale, twist to the right. Twist your head to each side as well. Gradually feel an increased rotation in your spine. Keep elbows parallel to the ground, allowing the arms to swing freely with the body. Repeat for 3 minutes.

## keep learning

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and helps us feel a sense of achievement. Using the practice of setting goals to learn something new also increases wellbeing.

## what can I do?

Enrol on a course in something you have always wanted to learn. try out a new gym class or start reading a new book on a specific topic.

You don't have to do long courses or even leave the house, there are many courses that are online and many that are free!

Downloading a language app to learn 5 minutes of a new language as you commute to work is a great way to stimulate your mind and give a sense of achievement – Tom uses Duolingo which is really fun and well structured.



“ *An underlying issue with directors is the fact that they are everyone’s counsellor, but no one can listen to their issues. We are the biggest pillow in the industry.* SDUK member ”

## give to others

Participation in group social and community has been proven to enhance wellbeing and give us a sense of belonging. Committing to one to two acts of kindness a week over a six-week period has been proven to improve wellbeing. A lot of our stresses and worries can also leave us feeling quite self-focussed, and whilst positive self-care is extremely important – thinking about our own worries can also keep us disconnected and without a balanced perspective. Giving to others and having an altruistic purpose can lift us out of our own thinking and take our attention externally, so giving is natural benefiting us!

### what can I do?

A great way to feel a sense of giving is to give your time to someone who may need it. Asking a friend for a catch up over coffee if you feel they might be struggling can really help. Give to local or national charities. Smile and connect to shop assistants, ask them how their day is going (you never know, you might get a free coffee!)

Going one step further and setting up a group or starting a small campaign to make positive social change is very empowering too – maybe there is something in your community that would believe could change? Keep it positively focussed and this can also work to help breed more connection in your life.

## be mindful

Being mindful is about taking a moment in your day to be present and bring your attention to your surroundings, thoughts and feelings. It sounds simple, but we all seem to struggle with this in our fast-paced lives.

Being more mindful increases your self-awareness and helps us to notice if we start to feel unhappy, overwhelmed or anxious.



Our brains are wired to think about the past and plan the future and so bringing our attention to the present moment naturally slows the mind down and taps into our seat of creativity. Reducing stress and being more present allows us to be more productive as we make better decisions, produce more quality and insightful work and connect better with people around us.

### **what can I do?**

A simple exercise which can be incorporated into your day is a walking meditation. This can be done anywhere at any time, whether you are walking to work, need to take five minutes out of a stressful situation or at the beginning of a rehearsal/workshop.

Bring attention to the sounds around you. Focus on the body and sensations from the balls of the feet up to the crown of the head. All the components of the body, limbs skin, muscle, bones, organs. Then bring the attention to the breath and let it carry you around the space, mindfully allowing thoughts to come and go with ease. Only focusing on the body and breath. Letting everything else go.

## **further support**

**Wellbeing for the Arts** is an initiative created especially for the Arts Industry to provide an escape from the fast-paced and often stressful industry we work in.

We welcome anyone within the performing and creative industries looking to dedicate an hour to relax, connect and boost their overall wellbeing.

Whether you're on stage, backstage or working in film/television these sessions have been designed to promote relaxation, provide tools to assist with stress management and align the mind and body.

Wellbeing for the Arts is absolutely free and aimed at creating a supportive, safe and uplifting space for like-minded people right in the heart of London's West End.

Please find us on Facebook at *Wellbeing for the Arts* to find out when our next session is!

# working with parents and carers ↓

## PIPA

SDUK are proud to be Strategic Partners of **Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PIPA)**, formed because the lack of support and provision for carers in the performing arts is endemic, and, if not addressed, will continue to see many being forced to leave the industry after starting a family, leading to a loss of talent and further inequality.

*Our work ... showed that the current situation for carers needs a long term voice working in partnership with the performing arts sector, developing strategies to provide organisations with solutions to ensure we get the best people staying in the workforce. Becoming a limited company means we continue our work in becoming the go-to resource for research, knowledge, strategy and solutions for carers and parents and helping to develop business resilience in arts organisations, ensuring the views and rights of those with caring responsibilities are uppermost in national strategic arts planning.*

PIPA Co-founders and Directors Anna Ehnold-Danailov and Cassie Raine

The PIPA Best Practice Charter is a set of guiding principles for all professional theatre organisations to follow, ensuring that places of work – and access to work – become as inclusive and accessible as possible to carers and parents.

## the charter

The PIPA Best Practice Charter makes the following recommendations for organisations and practitioners to actively commit to equal access to work by:

1. Adopting recruitment practices, including casting and programming, to welcome and enable access to job opportunities to carers and parents from the widest possible talent pool, reducing possible exclusions.
2. Proactively considering making roles (including short and long-term contracts) open to job share and flexible working, and including this option visibly in recruitment materials.
3. Reviewing and clearly communicating current policies and practices to ensure the needs of carers and parents are considered and wherever possible supported, and identifying key contacts within organisations for freelancers/employees to discuss their caring needs.
4. Identifying areas for change and improvement and actively developing strategies to overcome barriers for those with caring responsibilities.
5. Offering programmes and activities that promote equal access for carers and parents working in the performing arts.
6. Sharing best-practice, tools and training within the wider performing arts community and PIPA to help build an effective network for equality, diversity and inclusion across the sector.
7. Having in place at least one named individual within your organisation sufficiently senior to implement strategies to achieve change and to take responsibility for progress being achieved.
8. Setting targets, monitoring and evaluating progress internally, sharing data with peers in the Performing Arts Industry and funding bodies where appropriate.

“ *Wanting to be a foster parent and working out that it's probably going to be impossible with the way directing works at the moment...* SDUK member ”

**“** *Wanting to work, figuring out how to AFFORD to, needing support from institutions, companies with creche facilities etc. in order to network or see a show or have a meeting...* SDUK member **”**

9. Visibly supporting and promoting better working practices for all carers and parents across the organisation, including Board Level, as well as external communications including newsletters, press, social media and events.

**To find out more about the PIPA Best Practice Charter Programme please email [pipacampaign@gmail.com](mailto:pipacampaign@gmail.com)**

### **a few things to consider:**

- Think about audition/rehearsal/meeting hours – can you divide your day around the school run? Is there flexibility to allow for childcare/appointments/family emergencies?
- Could you budget for a childcare allowance for carers in your company?
- Can you prep your rehearsal schedule well in advance, rather than be reactive on the day, so that carers know when they're required with enough time to arrange alternative care?
- Provide nursing breaks and a suitable space for lactating mothers to feed or pump for their babies.
- Is there any scope for a company creche or childminder to be present?
- Do you expect carers to leave their commitments and worries at the door? Is this reasonable?
- If you're a family-friendly company, make sure you promote this in your job opportunities.
- Could the job or role be shared?
- Should the rehearsal room be completely closed to children? Or might they enhance the creativity and spontaneity of the process?

# abuses of power ↓

The following is taken from *Bullying & Harassment: A Handbook for Screen Directors*, published by our sister organisation, Directors UK ([www.directors.uk.com](http://www.directors.uk.com)). While written specifically for their members working in film and TV, the content is current and relevant to those working in theatre and live performance.

What has been apparent in our industry's bullying and harassment cases is an overriding absence of three core principles:

- A sense of accountability
- Clear lines of responsibility
- The extension of professional respect to all

In an industry so reliant on freelance workers, it has become all too easy for unacceptable behaviour to go unchallenged and be accepted as being 'the way things are'. To make things worse, contract workers are also excluded from certain rights that their permanent counterparts take for granted.

People may feel nervous about reporting an incident for fear of being labelled a troublemaker. It's easy to see how preserving one's professional reputation becomes paramount and how concerns over tarnishing one's name may shroud unacceptable behaviour. This means it's not unusual for freelance directors to find themselves working in an environment where bullying goes unchallenged and perpetrators elude reprimand.

## a guide to behaviours and their legal status

An incident motivated by a prejudice or bias due to age, marital status, religion, disability, pregnancy, gender, race or sexual orientation is covered by the Equality Act 2010 and is unlawful.

**[www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance)**

An incident become 'sexual' harassment if it contains actions or content of a sexual nature. This is also unlawful.

**[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/26](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/26)**

If non-consensual sexual behaviour is of a physical nature, it is classed as a sexual assault or rape and is a criminal act under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42)

Assault and Intimidation of a non-sexual nature is a criminal act under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/24-25/100/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/24-25/100/contents)

## what protection is there if you are being bullied or harassed?

Directors are typically self-employed, meaning that the majority won't have access to HR support and an employee grievance process. Despite this, freelancers still have workplace rights under the Equality Act 2010.

Whether you are a freelancer or permanent member of staff, your employer should make you aware of their bullying and harassment policy, resolution process and expected standards of behaviour. They should also ensure that their management and HR teams are equipped with the skills and training to deal with workplace harassment. However, as a freelancer, it can sometimes be difficult to persuade the hiring company to intervene if the bullying behaviour is not considered to be discriminatory as defined by the Equalities Act 2010. If that is the case, there are other avenues of the law that may offer protection, such as the Harassment Act 1997.

## what to do as a victim of bullying and harassment

### essentials:

- Keep good records (dates, times, description, witnesses) of all incidents
- Involve SDUK as soon as you feel you need help
- Approach the hiring company and ask them to resolve the situation
- Be prepared with information (you may need to take part in mediation with the perpetrator)
- Decide what resolution would be satisfactory (an apology, training, disciplinary action)



Victims must be empowered to speak out, as no one has the right to bully or harass another individual. SDUK can offer a first sounding board if a member needs advice about how to respond to an incident, and we will explain your options and offer guidance on appropriate action.

## what to do if you witness an incident

### essentials:

- Note who may also be a witness and mentally log events
- Intervene
- Advise your colleague of the support routes available
- Encourage them to seek the support of their professional body or trade union
- Report it to the producer

As managers of people, if directors wish to develop their professional skills in dealing with bullying and harassment, there are a number of free and inexpensive resources that they can access.

## what to do if you feel your own behaviour is inappropriate

### essentials:

- Be aware of your own behaviour
- Acknowledge where you have behaved inappropriately and apologise
- Identify ways you can change your behaviour
- Consider training/skills development

There is a difference between strong and forthright leadership and bullying. Everyone is susceptible to taking their emotions out on someone else in times of stress... However, this is not an excuse for poor behaviour. Remember, it doesn't matter what the intention of the interaction is, if the person on the receiving end feels intimidated or bullied, it's not acceptable. Treat others how you would like to be treated and if you realise that you've behaved badly, take the initiative and apologise. If the incident was in public, ideally the apology should be too. It will reinforce the principle that everyone, at every level of production, is accountable for their behaviour. Apologising takes courage but it can make all the difference, sparing those involved a more uncomfortable confrontation later on.



If one of your co-workers challenges your behaviour, try not to be defensive. Instead take time to listen to their complaint. Think how they may have misinterpreted your behaviour or how you could have handled an interaction better. It's up to you to create an environment where anyone feels they can safely challenge offending behaviour, even if you are the offender.

## what to do if you have been wrongly accused of poor behaviour

### essentials:

- Try to remain calm and do not confront your accuser
- Write down your understanding of any events that may have led to a false complaint
- Ask your employer to share with you their next steps, in terms of an existing complaints procedure and how the allegation will be fact-checked. Again, write these down
- Contact SDUK for further support



**SDUK will provide professional support without judgement if you believe you've been wrongly accused and we'll seek to ensure that you are treated fairly and appropriately**

## avoiding scenarios that could be misconstrued

As well as promoting an anti-bullying policy and establishing expected conduct in the workplace, it's useful to consider your own on-set etiquette to reduce opportunities for misunderstandings, for example:

**Language:** Dialogue (in rehearsals or) on set can sometimes be colourful. Whilst it is common to use expletives these days for punctuation or emphasis, some colleagues might find them offensive or aggressive. Try to be mindful of how you communicate...and use a professional tone.

**Clarity:** Be clear about what you want your colleagues to do and within what time frame. Make sure they understand your expectations and do not ask them to undertake unreasonable tasks that cannot be achieved. That would be unfair and could easily be misinterpreted as 'being set up to fail'.



**Don't be a gossip:** It might feel like harmless banter to sit with your crew and joke about someone not present. However, be mindful that conversations can easily escalate and your involvement could be seen as endorsing their exclusion or negative treatment from others. If you find yourself in this situation, try to shut down the conversation and remind everyone to be inclusive and respectful. Try to identify what assistance a person may need to be accepted into the group and if you're able, offer it to them.

**Physical contact:** The politics of touching is complex, and directors should be mindful of who, how and why they are touching someone in a professional context. Age, gender, status, belief, familiarity, trust, intimacy and necessity are just some of the factors at play when someone else reacts to being touched. As a rule, unless you know them well, stick to more formal contact such as shaking hands. If you must touch someone, ask 'may I?' first (see *Intimacy on stage guidelines* on p45).

**Consistency:** Ensure everyone in your crew is subject to and follows the same rules and behaviour. Do not give preferential treatment to friends or people with shared connections or sub-par treatment to those you do not bond with. Be consistently professional in how you treat everyone.

**Age:** If your project is crewed by people of different ages or backgrounds, accept that opinions on acceptable behaviour may differ. To bridge the gap, ensure everyone is working from the same set of rules that are defined at the start of the project. Let them know what you consider to be unacceptable — for example, sexist, ageist or racist comments.

**Meetings:** Hold one-on-one meetings in professional spaces as opposed to more intimate settings, such as at a private house or in a pub. If you are meeting with multiple people those locations are fine but for individuals, schedule meetings at the production office, rehearsal space, studio, in a quiet corner of the set or eating area to ensure that your invitation is not misconstrued and the individual feels at ease. If you do need privacy to give feedback or deal with a problem, then you should involve their agent/manager/Head of Department and invite them to be present (or the producer if it's a Head of Department that you need to speak to). This will help reduce the chances of a misunderstanding and give that person the confidence that they are being dealt with professionally. It is also good practice to explain in advance why you want to meet so they can prepare.

**Listen:** Listen to the ideas and feedback of your creative team and company. They are all skilled craftspeople in their own right and if they feel ignored, excluded or marginalised that could compromise your working relationship with them. If they do want to talk to you about what they consider to be an issue, listen to their concerns and try and find a reasonable resolution.

## frequently asked questions

### **What can I do about bullying and harassment?**

Eradicating bullying and harassment is everyone's shared responsibility. You can make a real impact on someone's life by simply supporting them. Part of the problem with the culture in our industry is that victims feel isolated and fearful to act. If you see something you think is wrong, challenge it and encourage the recipient to do so too. In every new role, make it one of your first tasks to ensure everyone knows how to behave and how to make a complaint.

### **Could making a complaint about a senior person lose me my job?**

Reporting an issue should not be detrimental to your career. Professional integrity should be at the core of the work we do. As professional craftspeople we must hold ourselves to high ideals. We need to help change the culture of fear. The more people that report bad behaviour, the faster the industry will evolve. If you feel you are going to be disadvantaged by reporting bad behaviour, contact SDUK and we will provide support and guidance.

### **I like banter on my set but is it bullying?**

It is bullying if the recipient feels uncomfortable or intimidated. This may not have been your intention but if your banter is of a personal nature, it may be misconstrued and cause offence. When you do not know new colleagues and how they might react, be mindful about the language and tone that you use in conversation.

### **I don't want to get involved in other people's conflicts at work, what should I do?**

Until an independent commission is in place to manage these incidents across the industry, being involved is a duty. The production company should have a bullying and harassment policy in place and you need



to know what it is so that you can advise your colleagues what to do. If you need additional advice on tackling a problem, you can contact SDUK.

### **I've seen some incidents over the years, but I haven't done anything about them. What are the legal consequences and liabilities of taking no action?**

There are three things to consider. First, being told of a harassment situation and ignoring it, or deliberately not dealing with it appropriately, is unlawful. It can be classed as 'victimisation' and the victim may decide to seek legal advice against you. Secondly, witnessing an incident and failing to act arguably makes you complicit. And thirdly, by doing nothing, you are likely making the outcome far worse for the victim. The perpetrator will wrongly believe that their behaviour is acceptable and will continue to bully the victim and possibly go on to bully others.

### **The organisations that hire me are small and don't have HR departments or have a code of conduct. What can I do?**

If there is no provision in place for dealing with bullying and harassment, lay out your own expectations for professional behaviour on set at the start of production. This can be delivered verbally, via email or with on-set signage. It can simply be a statement of intent but even this will act as a deterrent. For instance:

- Cast and crew must treat each other with dignity and respect
- Poor behaviour will not be tolerated
- If anyone witnesses bullying or harassment, they should intervene
- All bullying and harassment behaviour must be reported to the director/producer
- All incidents will be treated seriously, impartially and in confidence
- Retaliation against anyone for reporting an incident or intervening will be viewed with zero tolerance and perpetrators may be removed from set



**SDUK Members are expected to follow the SDUK Code of Conduct which lies out members' obligations to SDUK, our obligations to members, and the processes we follow if obligations haven't been met on either side.**

# intimacy on stage ↓

These guidelines have been provided by  
Intimacy Directors International UK (IDI-UK)

## IDI-UK's definition of intimacy for stage

Any moment that may include (but is not restricted to) the portrayal of kissing, "making-out", groping, contact with chest, contact with groin, simulated sex actions, sex postures and positions, portrayal of sexually traumatic events and sexual violence\*, scenes of mental manipulation relating to sex, scenes containing nudity, semi-nudity and state of undress. All of these should require choreography and supervision of safety by an Intimacy Director.

*\* sexual violence choreography should be constructed in collaboration with a Fight Director for physical and emotional safety of the Actor*

## intro to considerations around consent, nudity & simulated sex actions

- We recommend that Nudity, Simulated Sex Actions and Kissing should not be part of an audition process (note that kissing can transmit mouth to mouth diseases such as Cold Sores)
- If semi nudity or nudity is required in a recall then 24 hours notice will be given to the Actor, the Actor needs to consent and they can bring a third party to the audition to advocate for their safety
- An Actor has a right to their body. Thus consent can be retracted although they signed a contract



- Permission vs Consent: you can give permission for Actors to make contact but they both need to consent to it and how it is done
- Intimacy Choreography should not be created by the Actors themselves but by a specialist to avoid issues of sexual harassment, bullying and power dynamics
- Understudies have the right to be present in intimacy rehearsals so their boundaries are considered when the choreography is created. If needed, a couple of versions will be created and rehearsed to accommodate
- Always choreograph a version with non-contact kisses to avoid active cold sores or colds in rehearsal / run of the show
- Once consent is retracted the intimacy choreography is unsafe and therefore the Intimacy Director should be called back in to alter the choreography
- Choreography should be practiced with Stage Management in the room and not in private
- We recommend that Nudity should not be practiced in rehearsals. Before a studio run, nudity practice will be negotiated with the Actors, Costume Department and Stage Management so process is in place to support it
- Give a 24 hour notice before practicing nudity in rehearsals / studio run so Actors have time to raise any concerns and prepare
- Nudity safety guidelines / risk assessment should take into account the safety of Actors, creative team and technical team both on-stage and backstage

## **intimacy director versus intimacy coordinator**

An Intimacy Director specialises in creation of intimacy choreography for live performance. An Intimacy Coordinator is a movement specialist which supports the creation of intimate action in film and TV only. These two are very different roles due to the demands of the environment and its methods of practice (similarly to the differences between Fight Director and Stunt Coordinator).

## what is an intimacy director (ID)?

An Intimacy Director oversees and facilitates the process of intimacy rehearsals, creation of choreography and staging of intimate action. An ID is a movement specialist hired by the Director/Theatre Company and their role has minimum three basic fundamentals:

### Safety

- Advocate for the safety of the Performers, Stage Management and Technical Team during rehearsals, Technical Rehearsals, Dress, Previews and Press Performance
- Support open communication and harnesses sensitivity, equality, open space & consent
- Utilise movement based staging techniques and methods of practice to support safe process in the rehearsal room and on stage

### Facilitation of Action

- To choreograph intimate action taking the performer's boundaries and their consent into account
- Liaise with Costume, Wigs and Stage Management about modesty attire, barriers and sexual health measures to put in place

### Storytelling

- Support the vision of the Director, Writer and Actors. Choreography can be realised in a collaborative manner to serve the story, the individuals performing it and creative team's vision

## what qualifies someone as an intimacy director?

There are a couple of companies that now provide certification. IDI-UK is one of those and is a branch of IDI (USA) which originated the practice.

We recommend that when employing an Intimacy Director they should have the following:

- Professional Experience of Intimacy Direction credits (note that not all Movement Directors or Fight Directors are trained in intimacy practice, they should be credited for that work)



- Demonstrate an understanding and previous experience of choreographing intimacy (simulated sex actions, nudity / semi nudity etc - please see Intimacy definition)
- Show experience of working with Actors, Stage Directors and with Theatre Departments
- Required Training: intimacy for stage certification course, movement pedagogy experience (instructing movement to Actors), certified in unarmed stage combat (this is important since it demonstrates an understanding of techniques used to mask contact, an understanding of contact negotiation and helps the Intimacy Director when choreographing sexual trauma / collaborating on sexual violence scenes. Please note that sexual violence should be choreographed in collaboration with a Fight Director)
- No previous criminal record
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Mental Health First Aid for Adults
- Mental Health First Aid for Youth (if production involves minors)

## **recommended engagement with an intimacy director should involve:**

1. Contact them in pre-production stage to discuss process, play / scene requirements, what needs to be facilitated, amount of sessions and level of engagement.
2. Discuss how they work and what they require to do their job in an ideal manner.
3. Connect them to Theatre Departments, Creative Team members etc.
4. Introduce them to the Actors performing intimacy (and to those in the scene that observe it or interrupt it etc).
5. Involve them in any nudity & simulated sex action discussions that you or the Producer may have with the Actors. Any nudity & simulated sex actions clauses agreed on should be passed to the Intimacy Director at the pre-rehearsal stage.



6. Discuss and set rehearsal intimacy guidelines with Intimacy Director and Stage Management (such as: closed rehearsal, nudity practice protocols etc).
7. Schedule intimacy sessions in rehearsals and a technical session all with the Intimacy Director present.
8. Schedule intimacy calls for Actors before each performance.
9. Intimacy Director will be engaged for Pre-production, intimacy sessions, see a run of the show in the studio, Technical Rehearsals, Dress, Previews, Press Performance. (Be advised that each Intimacy Director will negotiate service terms and rates individually).

## **IDI-UK's recommended rates for intimacy directors**

Each ID will charge their own rate card and services may differ. We recommend Intimacy Directors base their rates on current Equity/ITC/SOLT Choreographer's rates and Fight Director's rates. Rates should include: preparation, session fees, insurance etc.

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## **for more information**

**[www.teamidi-uk.org](http://www.teamidi-uk.org)**  
**[info@teamidi-uk.org](mailto:info@teamidi-uk.org)**

## further support ↓

### huge thanks to our contributors:

**Equity:** [www.equity.org.uk](http://www.equity.org.uk)

**Creative Juice:** [www.creativejuice.org.uk](http://www.creativejuice.org.uk)

**Wellbeing for the Arts:** [www.facebook.com/groups/1147779342030452](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1147779342030452)

**Parents & Carers in Performing Arts (PIPA):** [www.pipacampaign.com](http://www.pipacampaign.com)

**ACAS:** [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

**Arts Council England:** [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Directors UK:** [www.directors.uk.com](http://www.directors.uk.com)

**Intimacy Directors International - UK branch:** [www.teamidi-uk.org](http://www.teamidi-uk.org)

### industry-specific support & advice:

**Arts Council Wales:** [www.arts.wales](http://www.arts.wales)

**Creative Scotland:** [www.creativescotland.com](http://www.creativescotland.com)

**Independent Theatre Council (ITC):** Management organisation for the independent theatre sector. Offers training, legal and financial advice etc  
[www.itc-arts.org](http://www.itc-arts.org)

**Arts Minds:** support hub run by Equity, BAPAM, Spotlight and The Stage  
[www.artsminds.co.uk](http://www.artsminds.co.uk)

**British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM):** Access to counselling, psychotherapy and other services for physical and mental health.  
[www.bapam.org.uk](http://www.bapam.org.uk)

**Federation of Entertainment Unions (FEU)** Guide to dealing with bullying, harassment and discrimination in the entertainment and media industries:  
[www.equity.org.uk/documents/creating-without-conflict-anti-bullying-guide](http://www.equity.org.uk/documents/creating-without-conflict-anti-bullying-guide)

### national advisory organisations & legislation:

**Citizens Advice Bureau:** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**Government Advice on workplace bullying & harassment:**  
[www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harrasment](http://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harrasment)

**The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974:** [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37)

**The Human Rights Act 1998:** [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)

## sexual abuse/harassment/bullying:

**Male abuse survivors service:** [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

**National Bullying Helpline:** [www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk](http://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk)

**Rape Crisis England & Wales:** [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

**Rape Crisis Scotland:** [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)

**Rape and Sexual Assault Referral Centres:** [thesurvivorstrust.org/sarc](http://thesurvivorstrust.org/sarc)

**Victim Support:** [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

**Rape & Assault support in London:** [www.thehavens.org.uk](http://www.thehavens.org.uk)

**Sexual Offences Act 2003:** [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents)

## discrimination:

**EASS (Equality Advisory Support Service):**

[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com) / 0808 800 0082

**EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission):**

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

**Maternity Action:**

[www.maternityaction.org.uk](http://www.maternityaction.org.uk)

## access to counselling/psychotherapy/ talking:

**It's Good To Talk** (counselling & psychotherapy)

[www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk](http://www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk)

**NHS IAPT Services** (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies)

[www.nhs.gov.uk](http://www.nhs.gov.uk)

**Samaritans:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) / (text) 116 123



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