

Venue Hire and Speakers Guidance

This short guide has been developed to support your role in managing community venues.



Venues are hired to host external speakers on many different topics. Most speakers have a positive input, and some may provide opportunities for communities to consider different viewpoints, enabling people to develop or challenge their own opinions. However, there are also individuals and groups who seek to advocate or promote extreme views, including the use of violence, both online and offline. Such groups/individuals may promote and obtain support for their cause or beliefs by speaking at a community venue or event.

Although their background may not be immediately obvious, allowing the use of your facility by someone who subsequently promotes an extreme narrative could create community tensions, media attention, and damage the reputation of your organisation or facility. Asking a few key questions when the initial request is received can help to identify whether the speaker(s) have any affiliations with which your venue would not want to be associated.

1. Who wants to use your venue?

- Name & contact of main organiser.
- Name & details of speaker.
- Checks – who do they represent?
- Checks – have they spoken before?
- Date, time & place of meeting. Is this significant for any reason?
- Expected arrival & departure time.
- How many attendees are expected?

2. Why they want to use the your venue?

- Checks – what is the focus of the event?
- Checks – how is the event advertised?
- Checks – conditions ie; tickets, open event?
- Checks – is the event to be segregated?
- Checks – will any media be present?

3. How they want to use your venue?

- The speaker's reputation and who may be prompted to attend.
- Will the speaker agree to abide by your venue's regulations & values?
- Any risks for the venue's reputation?
- Any potential for speaker to use language that may be unlawful?
- Any health & safety issues?
- What security needs may be required?



If you have any concerns about allowing access to your venue by any speaker you can contact:

Sussex Police Prevent Team

Email: SussexPrevent@thamesvalley.police.uk

To talk to the Prevent Team, call 101 and ask for the Prevent Team.

West Sussex County Council – Resilient Communities Development Team

Email: prevent@westsussex.gov.uk

1. Who wants to use your venue?

- Record speaker's address, mobile numbers, and organisations details
- Has the identity of the speaker been confirmed and is their organisation legitimate? Do you know anything about them?
- Is the speaker from the area?
- Undertake checks on the internet to confirm the status of the speaker through websites, YouTube, or other social media sites. If concerned you can contact the Sussex Police Prevent Team or the Resilient Communities Development Team (details above).
- How many people are likely to attend (check previous or similar events either locally or online)?

2. Why do they want to use your venue?

- What subject matter will the event focus on and how will it be marketed? Will it be advertised locally or either regionally or nationally?
- Has the subject matter received any regional or national criticism or hostility through any previous events? Do you know why? Do you know if the subject matter could create or exacerbate local tensions?
- Why has your venue been chosen for this event? Is it for capacity, local interest or some other reason?
- Are the event organisers requesting special conditions such as a closed meeting, tickets, or any kind of segregation?
- Has any pressure (either directly or indirectly) been undertaken by any person or community members to run or not to run this event? Do you know why?

3. How do they want to use your venue?

- Does the speaker or organisation they represent have a reputation for causing disruptions at venues?
- Are there likely to be any health and safety or public order issues that may occur because of the event?
- If you have any concerns regarding the above, before the event, you can contact the Sussex Police Prevent Team and/or the Resilient Communities Development Team to share concerns or seek further information.
- Are there any risks to the venues reputation by hosting this event?
- Will the event be supervised by venue staff and/or will the speaker agree to abide by any venue condition of access?