



FRAMEWORK FOR WELL-BEING & SAFETY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Shared Commitments for 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

This document sets out practical shared commitments and prompts to support well-being and safety in public space during the 2026 festival season. It forms part of the wider Without Walls Framework for Well-being and Safety in Public Space, translating emerging shared principles into clear, usable guidance for artists, producers, Artistic Directorate festivals and Touring Network Partners.

Artists working in public space make a vital and irreplaceable contribution to civic life. The outdoor arts sector has always operated in dynamic, contested and unpredictable environments, and that is part of its power. This work should continue. These commitments do not seek to remove creative risk or reduce the vitality of public performance. Instead, they focus on reducing avoidable harm and uncertainty, particularly in situations involving hostility, intimidation, discrimination, isolation or unclear escalation routes.

The intention is to provide:

- Clear points of contact and escalation
- Shared commitments across partners
- Practical prompts to support preparation and delivery
- Clarity around pause, adaptation or withdrawal where safety is compromised
- Consistency across different festivals and touring contexts

This guidance is designed to be proportionate and usable. It does not replace existing safeguarding, health and safety, security or HR policies held by individual organisations. Rather, it supports alignment and clarity across commissioning and touring relationships within the Without Walls network. For the 2026 season, the priority is visible, practical measures that can be understood and used immediately, while longer-term structural development continues.

This document is structured around three practical checklists designed for active use:

- Preparation before the event
- Immediate response during an incident
- Aftercare and follow-up

These checklists are designed to support preparation, response and reflection, and may be used by both festival teams and artists to support clarity and shared accountability.

2. Shared Commitments for 2026

For the 2026 season, Without Walls invites partners across the network to align with the following shared commitments. These commitments are intended to support clarity and



consistency across partnerships. They are not additional policies, but shared points of alignment that sit alongside existing safeguarding, health and safety and operational procedures.

2.1 Named Well-being Contact

Each festival or partner organisation should identify and communicate a named point of contact responsible for artist and delivery team well-being during the event. This individual should be clearly briefed, accessible throughout the period of activity and, where possible, supported with appropriate preparation or training for handling sensitive or escalated situations.

2.2 Clear Escalation Pathway

A clear and agreed escalation pathway for raising concerns, including non-physical concerns such as hostility, harassment or discriminatory behaviour, should be communicated in advance.

Artists and delivery teams should know:

- Who to contact first
- What will happen next
- How incidents will be recorded
- Who holds decision-making authority in escalation situations

The pathway should include clarity on follow-up communication after an incident, so that artists and staff are not left without resolution or response.

Where an incident may constitute a hate crime or involves discriminatory behaviour, the following should be clear:

- The role of the well-being contact is to listen, support and document, not to make unilateral decisions about escalation
- Any consideration of reporting to the police should only happen with the informed consent and expressed wishes of the person affected
- Artists and staff should never feel pressured to report, and organisations should recognise that mistrust of statutory systems is a reality for many people
- Where the person affected does wish to report, it should be clear who supports that process and what happens next

2.3 Legitimacy of Pause or Withdrawal

Where safety or well-being is compromised, artists must be able to pause, adapt or step out of performance without penalty. Agreed language and process for this should be clarified in advance.

2.4 Recognition of Walkabout and Roaming Exposure

Walkabout and roaming performances require additional clarity due to fluid performance locations and increased exposure. Partners should consider, in advance of delivery:

- Agreed performance locations
- Clear monitoring or support presence where appropriate



- Safe and supported routes between dressing areas and performance sites
- Clear assistance signals or escalation protocols

2.5 Post-Incident Check-in

Where an incident occurs that impacts well-being or safety, a follow-up conversation should take place. This follow-up should occur in a spirit of learning and care.

2.6 Shared Responsibility

Well-being in public space is shaped by multiple roles and relationships, including artists, festivals, commissioning bodies and delivery teams. Clarity, communication and response are collective commitments across commissioning and delivery relationships.

3. Before the Event – Practical Preparation Checklist

The following prompts are intended to support clarity and reduce avoidable uncertainty before delivery begins. They may be addressed through existing production conversations, tech riders, risk assessments, site visits or festival briefings.

3.1 Clarity of Contacts

- Has a named well-being contact been identified and communicated clearly to artists, delivery teams and relevant staff?
- Has the escalation pathway been communicated clearly?
- In the event of hostility or behaviour impacting well-being, is decision-making authority clear?
- Is there a shared understanding of how incidents involving potential hate crimes or discriminatory behaviour will be handled, including the consent and wishes of the person affected?

3.2 Context and Environment

- Has relevant local context been considered and shared in advance where appropriate?
- Have performance locations been agreed in advance?
- For walkabout or roaming work, have boundaries and movement areas been clarified?
- Are dressing areas and access points safe, accessible and appropriate?
- Are on-site roles in responding to hostility or escalation clearly defined?

3.3 Movement and Transition

- Are routes between dressing areas and performance sites safe and supported?
- Has it been agreed how artists can signal for assistance if required?
- Is there clarity about who shadows or monitors roaming work, where appropriate?
- Are staff and stewards clear on their role if hostility or discrimination is reported?

3.4 Legitimacy of Pause

- Has it been agreed that artists may pause, adapt or step out of performance where safety or well-being is compromised?
- Is it clear who is informed immediately and how this is communicated?

3.5 Shared Understanding

- Have expectations around respectful behaviour and audience interaction been communicated to staff and volunteers?
- Do staff understand the escalation pathway and their role within it?
- Is there a shared understanding that concerns raised about well-being will be taken seriously and responded to proportionately?
- Are staff aware that concerns from any team member should be responded to consistently?

4. During an Incident – Immediate Response Prompts

Public space performance can involve unpredictability. Where an incident occurs that impacts the well-being or safety of an artist, producer, site manager, volunteer or other staff member, a calm and proportionate response supports both artistic integrity and collective care. The following sequence may help provide clarity in the moment:

4.1 Immediate Safety

- Has immediate safety been prioritised for the person affected?
- Has the individual been supported to step out of performance or duty if required?
- Has space been created away from the immediate source of concern?

4.2 Escalation

- Has the named well-being contact been informed?
- Has the agreed escalation pathway been followed?
- Where appropriate, have security or relevant personnel been engaged?
- Where an incident may involve discriminatory behaviour or a hate crime, has the consent of the person affected been sought before any consideration of external reporting?

4.3 Authority and Decision-Making

- Is it clear who holds decision-making authority regarding continuation, adaptation or pause of performance or activity?
- Has the person affected been included in this decision-making conversation where appropriate?

4.4 Communication

- Has clear communication taken place between relevant parties?
- Has the reported experience been listened to and acknowledged before decisions are made?

4.5 Recording

- Has the incident been documented through appropriate internal reporting processes?



5. Aftercare and Follow-Up

Incidents in public space can have lingering impact, even where they are resolved quickly. A brief and proportionate follow-up helps ensure that individuals are not left carrying the impact alone. The following prompts may support closure and learning:

5.1 Immediate Follow-Up

- Did a check-in take place with the person affected?
- Was their experience heard and acknowledged?
- Was there clarity about what actions were taken in response?

5.2 Resolution and Communication

- Was it clarified whether any further action was required?
- Were relevant team members informed appropriately?
- Was the individual updated on any outcomes where appropriate?

5.3 Reflection and Learning

- Was the incident reviewed to consider whether preparation or communication could be strengthened?
- Were any patterns or recurring themes noted?

5.4 Ongoing Support

- Where appropriate, was the individual signposted to available sources of support?
- Was workload or delivery expectation considered if impact continued?



6. Context and Continuing Development

This guidance has been developed in response to concerns and lived experience shared across the Without Walls network, from Board level through to the Artist Advisory Group and the Diversity and Inclusion Action Group.

Artists, producers, site managers and delivery teams have described situations in which clarity, consistency and visible support were not always clear or present. These shared commitments are intended to make that support more explicit and accessible during the 2026 season.

Outdoor arts remains a space of encounter, spontaneity and productive risk. This document does not seek to remove that vitality. Rather, it recognises that clarity strengthens confidence, and that shared responsibility supports creative freedom.

This guidance forms part of a wider programme of work on well-being and safety in public space. Further development will continue beyond 2026, informed by lived experience, partner dialogue and sector learning.

For this season, the priority is visible, proportionate support that reflects our shared commitment to well-being and safety in public space.