

**PRESS RELEASE
TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2017**

**ROYAL COURT THEATRE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR VICKY FEATHERSTONE
PROGRAMS A DAY OF ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE WEINSTEIN
REVELATIONS.**

Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director Royal Court Theatre;

“Following last week’s revelations concerning Harvey Weinstein it is time to confront the abuses of power that have been occurring in our own industry for years. I tweeted last week to ask what we should be doing and I was overwhelmed by the open and candid response from the many people who got in touch with me, sharing their stories and suggesting courses of action. What shocked me most was how many of those who approached me were fearful they’d be named and also of the significant negative implications speaking out could have for them. Despite those fears they wanted to have their voices heard to prevent such abuses happening to those coming after them.

Having set up and led major arts organisations over the last 20 years I have always had very clear policies on how to manage such abuses of power and how to empower my staff to have the confidence in dealing with and reporting such issues.

Last year at the Royal Court we had a company-wide meeting - a Town Hall, on sexual harassment in the theatre. The outcome of this session was a mutually agreed verbal code of conduct that all Royal Court staff are very clear on. One which eliminates the so-called grey areas that so often allow people to get away with abuses of power. That session gave those who are subject to such abuses clear avenues to confidently take further action.

Sexual harassment, predominately carried out by those in power to people in positions junior to them, is systemic. It is across every part of our society. If it is not dealt with in an open way we have no hope of change, and change must happen.

On Saturday 28 October, 2017 we will be holding two events - an industry-wide Town Hall session, to pass on what we have learnt and the policies we agreed on from it, and to learn best practise from our peers. And a sharing - where those of you who wish to have your stories heard can have a space for them to be told. This event will be curated by Royal Court Associate Director Lucy Morrison drawing on the input of many of you who have so brilliantly offered up your support.

The Royal Court exists to tell the stories that are otherwise unheard. We have therefore created an online forum where you can safely, and (if you choose), anonymously tell us your stories. Whether you consider it a big or small thing, if someone in a position of power over you has made you feel sexually compromised, or at all uncomfortable, then be brave, tell us what happened. We will take care of your story.

*As Erica Whyman said today in her article in The Stage ‘I have a responsibility to make our theatre a place where none of us needs to think twice before calling out and addressing behaviour that we all already know is unacceptable’
So come on let’s end this bullshit“*

#speakout #greysareanomore

For more details on the events mentioned and to tell your story see <https://royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/no-grey-area-your-stories-heard/>

For more information please contact Anoushka Warden on 0207 565 5063 / AnoushkaWarden@royalcourttheatre.com

Notes to Editors:

Rules of Engagement for the Day

On 28 Oct the Royal Court is holding a day of action to address and strive to end abuses of power that have led to sexual harassment in the theatre industry. This is a free, public event for those who work or are training in the theatre.

It is not intended as a platform to “name and shame”, although we recognize that this is important for some people. We will provide legal and other advice for those that wish to pursue this.

This event is the beginning of a process across our whole industry. We anticipate more events will come out of it.

The below rules of engagement are the framework for participation on the day.

- The event is to examine experiences in the theatre workplace or training – not personal experiences outside of work.
- The event will not provide structured victim support; whilst we will be able to point participants towards help, we will be focusing on professional learning and future-focused change-making
- The event is for women and men, and we encourage people at all stages of their training and careers to attend
- There will be conversations and events happening across the building – each space has a different code of conduct:
- The reading of stories in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs is a performative, public event and we will follow our legal responsibilities around placing work in the public domain. We will redact sensitive information, names, and identifying details from stories so that this space is free of legal risk.
- The Town Hall workshops in the Jerwood Theatre Upstairs will be confidential spaces; however experiences, insights and learnings from those spaces will be used to form a Code of Conduct which we will share publicly at the end of the day. It is our ambition that

this Code of Conduct is collectively adopted by theatre organisations as part of their dignity, respect and wellbeing policies.

- The Site will be a closed, confidential space for those who wish to explore more deeply the options for them to act upon or share more widely their experiences of harassment. There will be legal advice and pointers towards support organisations in this space.
- The bar and kitchen will be open all day and we encourage conversations to keep happening. Participants must assume confidentiality and respect others at all times.
- The events across the day are not open to the press and any unofficial press reporting would be in breach of the protections around the day. However, we look forward to working with the media after the day as the process continues. Please contact Head of Press Anoushka Warden for further information on this point.
- We will not be making film or sound recordings of any of the events in any of the spaces. We will document the day through note-taking and will write up the learnings to be shared industry-wide.
- We ask that all participants are mindful and respectful in their own social media use on the day.
- We are working closely with sister theatres and trade organisations on this event and are committed to collaborative action.

The Royal Court Theatre is the writers' theatre. It is the leading force in world theatre for energetically cultivating writers - undiscovered, emerging and established.

Through the writers, the Royal Court is at the forefront of creating restless, alert, provocative theatre about now. We open our doors to the unheard voices and free thinkers that, through their writing, change our way of seeing.

Over 120,000 people visit the Royal Court in Sloane Square, London, each year and many thousands more see our work elsewhere through transfers to the West End and New York, UK and international tours, digital platforms, our residencies across London, and our site-specific work. Through all our work we strive to inspire audiences and influence future writers with radical thinking and provocative discussion. The Royal Court's extensive development activity encompasses a diverse range of writers and artists and includes an ongoing programme of writers' attachments, readings, workshops and playwriting groups. Twenty years of the International Department's pioneering work around the world means the Royal Court has relationships with writers on every continent.

Within the past sixty years, John Osborne, Samuel Beckett, Arnold Wesker, Ann Jellicoe, Howard Brenton, David Hare have started their careers at the Court. Many others including Caryl Churchill, Athol Fugard, Mark Ravenhill, Simon Stephens, Debbie Tucker Green, Sarah Kane; and, more recently, Lucy Kirkwood, Nick Payne, Penelope Skinner and Alistair McDowall, have followed.

The Royal Court has produced many iconic plays from Laura Wade's *Posh* to Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem* and Martin McDonagh's *Hangmen*.



Royal Court plays from every decade are now performed on stage and taught in classrooms and universities across the globe.

It is because of this commitment to the writer that we believe there is no more important theatre in the world than the Royal Court

A message from our partners at Clean Break

Social Media has been tough this week. As more and more stories of sexual harassment in the media have broken, some incredibly brave women have come forward and shared their own experiences, leaving us to all echoing 'me too'.

Whilst this has been an amazing triumph, it's been a tough week that has sometimes been quite triggering for those who have experienced harassment or abuse.

Let us say right now, to everyone, those who have shared their experiences through #metoo and those who didn't, we see you, we hear you and your experience is valid and important.

Whilst this has been a moment of empowerment for some women, it is also incredibly important that we practise self-care. If you feel you can't or don't want to speak to anyone close to you about your own experiences there are some people who are there to listen:

Equality and Human Rights Commission – Sexual Harassment – **0845 604 6610**

NHS Direct Helpline: **0845 46 47**

Victim Support **08 08 16 89 111**

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre **0808 802 9999**

National Domestic Violence Helpline **08457 023 047**

The Rape and Abuse Line **0808 800 0123**

Women's Aid Federation of England **0808 2000 247**

