

THE LOWRY INVOLUNTARY NOISE POLICY

STATEMENT

The Lowry is a fully inclusive, welcoming venue and organisation, with a strategic aim to allow access to the arts to all members of the community. We often welcome visitors to the building with a disability, including patrons who may make involuntary noises. We always endeavour to ensure we are best placed to offer the highest level of service to all customers and this policy outlines The Lowry's definitive approach to dealing with involuntary noise.

All staff and volunteers must adhere to this policy

SECTION 1: THE LAW

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on providers of goods, services and facilities, such as The Lowry, to make reasonable adjustments in order to avoid a disabled person being placed at a "substantial disadvantage" compared with non-disabled people when accessing these services and facilities. Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably because they are disabled. There is also protection from direct disability discrimination and harassment for people who are associated with a disabled person, for example, a Personal Assistant. Service providers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the way they deliver their services. This is so that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people in accessing the services.

SECTION 2: POLICY FOR ASSISTING PEOPLE MAKING INVOLUNTARY NOISE AND THEIR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

The Lowry will not ask a disabled patron making an involuntary noise to leave a performance however we have a duty of care to understand where the noise is coming from, why the noise is being made, and what we may be able to do to assist the person making the noise.

Instructions for Staff and Volunteers

Staff or volunteers who become aware of noise being made in the auditoria should not attempt to resolve the situation themselves and instead should immediately contact their House Manager to advise;

- Where the noise is coming from
- How frequent the noise is
- If anyone has left the auditoria
- If anyone has made a complaint
- If anyone has asked for assistance

Instructions for House Manager

The House Manager's first priority is to enter the space to assess the noise for themselves, assuring the staff member or volunteer they have the matter in hand.

If appropriate the House Manager should approach the person making the noise and their assistant, to ensure that they are enjoying the show and see if there is anything we can do to assist or make them more comfortable. It may be practical on some occasions to have this conversation outside the auditoria, but it is important to make it clear they are in no way being asked to leave the theatre.

Should the person making involuntary noise or their Personal Assistant ask if it is possible for them to leave the theatre during the performance, they should be reassured that this is acceptable. The House Manager should inform the volunteers on the appropriate doors that this may happen.

The House Manager should provide details of how they may be contacted to the person making the involuntary noise or their Personal Assistant, and advise that the TV monitor can be turned on in a number of our bars if helpful, should they at any point wish to leave the auditoria but still wish to view the performance.

Through conversation with the person making the involuntary noise and their Personal Assistant, it may be practical to move their seats, for example to aisle seats if available, or to Box 1 which are allocated House seats. However, it needs to be made clear that The Lowry is in no way forcing the patrons to move, simply explaining that there may be alternative seating that may be suitable if access to and from the auditoria may be required. It is the choice of the person making the involuntary noise and/or their Personal Assistant.

The House Manager should also inform the Company Manager and Theatres Technical Manager that we are aware of a patron in the auditoria making involuntary noise, and that the matter is in hand. It may be appropriate to ensure that the visiting company are aware of this policy of assisting patrons who make involuntary noise.

SECTION 2: POLICY FOR CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS REGARDING INVOLUNTARY NOISE

Instructions for Staff and Volunteers

Staff and Volunteers should inform the House Manager immediately of any complaints received in regard to involuntary noise, and assure the patron that the House Manager is managing the situation. If the patron making the comment wishes to discuss the matter in more detail, they should be passed on to the House Manager. Staff and volunteers should not enter into extended conversations, and should under no circumstances discuss personal opinions.

Instructions for House Manager

When a patron complains to the House Manager, the situation should be explained by advising the customer that we have a patron enjoying the show with us today who makes involuntary noise. The majority of people fully understand the situation and are accepting of it.

If the patron is not satisfied with the above response the House Manager should inform the patron it is illegal to discriminate against anyone with a disability or those who care for them, with reference to the Equality Act 2010, therefore The Lowry will not ask a person making involuntary noises to move unless they and/or their Personal Assistant are happy to do so.

Depending on availability, it may be possible to offer to move the people/parties making a complaint.

If the customer wishes to escalate their complaint they should be asked to write a letter addressed to Customer Care, and explain that the Director responsible for customer care will respond within 14 days.

This Involuntary Noise policy is endorsed by:

Name: Julia Fawcett Position: Group Chief Executive

Signature: *Julia Fawcett* Date: 6 May 2016