



## HOW TO TAKE ACTION FOR PALESTINE AS A CHARITY

### We are an arts charity - can we take action on Palestine?

Yes! While there are some restrictions around charities' ability to undertake work deemed 'political activity', this does not mean that you can't undertake work in solidarity with Palestine.

It's a myth that registered charities in the UK are prohibited from undertaking political activity. Despite this, many larger charities use a perceived restriction on political activity as a reason not to take positions on international issues, which in turn influences smaller charities who might feel more at risk.

The big issue for the Charity Commission is when political activity is in support of a registered political party. This is usually prohibited, though there are some exceptions.

Another key point is that activity that is deemed 'political' cannot constitute the entirety of what a charity does.

'Political activity' is defined by the Charity Commission as work that aims to influence or change government policy or that of public bodies'. Therefore, something like a solidarity statement or adopting ethically grounded cultural boycott guidelines may not fall under political activity.

*\* Charity law differs between Scotland and England and Wales, with distinct regulators and legislation. This document focuses on how the Charity Commission regulates charities in England and Wales.*

### The action we want to take *is* political activity - what now?

If you feel that what you want to do *would* be considered political activity by the Charity Commission, then you should consider the following:

- **How the work relates to your charitable objectives.** Charities can take part in political activity that "*supports their purpose and is in their best interests*", as long as the charity remains independent and the political activity does not become the primary reason for the charity's existence.

For example, if your charitable objects relate to advancing education, understanding, social justice or diversity, or if your work has an international dimension, consider



how your Palestine activity relates to those terms, and to the mission and purpose of your organisation, and how you will articulate this.

You may also want to consider looking over your internal policies, for example on communications and social media, and ensuring they are compatible with the work you wish to do.

- **Whether you have the support of your board.** Trustees have the responsibility of governing charities and ensuring compliance with regulation. The Charity Commission grants a great deal of discretion to trustees in deciding which activities are in the interest of the charity to pursue. But you must be able to show that your trustees have had oversight.

To help trustees be better equipped, consider offering tailored educational sessions so your organisation can more confidently support work on Palestine. (See recommendations below for organisations that can deliver this.)

- **You may want to do a risk assessment, or your board might ask you to.** In addition to considering risks to the charity arising from taking action, consider the risks of failing to act. For example, risks of reputational damage over perceived silence on war crimes; staff safeguarding issues deriving from lack of clarity on organisational stance; cultural workers or other external service providers withholding their services from your programme for ethical reasons. Make a note of appropriate mitigating actions.
- **Anticipate challenge but don't be overly influenced by it.** You should build in checks to ensure you are not being overly reactive or self-censoring.
- **How you will document this consultation process.** Evidence the process. Have a paper trail showing how decisions have been reached in minuted board meetings, having trustees sign off on risk assessments and on whether any mitigations are needed.

Should questions be raised by the Charity Commission because someone has made a complaint about your activity, being able to show that due process has been followed will ensure that a simple inquiry does not turn into a formal investigation.

## We've done all this and we're still being challenged - what do we do?

- Don't panic. There are groups that will always attempt to create negative consequences for those platforming Palestinian experiences and perspectives, or



expressing solidarity with Palestine. In most cases these pressure groups hope threats and intimidation will dissuade charities from engaging with Palestinian rights. In addition, regulatory bodies are risk averse and have obligations to respond and check for potential breaches.

If you are well-prepared and have considered the steps in the section above, you will be in a strong position to act with transparency and confidence as you weather any pushback.

- Receiving an inquiry from the Charity Commission does not mean a complaint is being upheld. The Charity Commission is obliged to respond to complaints, but this does not mean there has been any breach of guidelines nor that a formal investigation is under way.
- Be transparent. This can feel counter intuitive when under pressure, but if you are confident that you have taken action in a way that aligns with your governing documents and charitable objectives, consider explaining what you are doing publicly, on your own website and social media, or even to media outlets where this is appropriate.

This will be context dependent, but can help to head off inaccurate depictions of your work, and also encourage other organisations and diminish the fear of speaking out. If you believe that criticism of your organisation is baseless and politically motivated, then you should consider saying this.

- It's important to consider the risks of silence too. Staying quiet can feel like a safe option, but in the current climate there's a strong case to be made that doing nothing may be damaging in terms of public perception, and this should be weighed against any potential controversy from speaking out.
- Seek support from organisations that can help, and talk to other charities that have taken similar action.

## Further resources, guidance and support

**Artists for Palestine UK** (APUK) coordinates artist-led campaigns focused on the need to end complicity with Israel's crimes and to press for accountability, particularly in the cultural sector, using guidelines laid out by The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). We promote PPAN's [model policy](#) for arts charities as a simple commitment to respect for international law and universalist values, while offering clarity for staff, artists, audiences, funders and other bodies.



**Art Workers for Palestine Scotland** has produced excellent resources and guidance for arts charities in Scotland. It calls for arts and cultural spaces across Scotland to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian people, including by formally endorsing the guidelines laid out by PACBI.

**British Palestinian Committee** comprises British Palestinian citizens with experience in a range of professional fields including policy, advocacy, human rights, law, academia, journalism, arts and culture. Working to ensure Palestinians in Britain enjoy the same rights to freedom of expression and full participation in cultural life as everyone else.

**European Legal Support Centre (ELSC)** provides free legal advice and assistance to associations, human rights NGOs, groups and individuals advocating for Palestine in mainland Europe and Britain. Monitors and intervenes to end arbitrary restrictions on advocacy for Palestine.

**Jewish Artists for Palestine** are artists, writers, creatives and culture workers taking action in support of Palestinian liberation. Fighting censorship and anti-Palestinian racism in the UK culture sector.

**Makan** is a Palestinian-led UK based charity dedicated to interconnected learning. Situating Palestine within the context of other human rights, social justice and global liberation movements, Makan provides tailored workshops that offer a critical understanding of Palestine, its history, and the discourse around it, for all levels.

**Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)** has developed detailed, ethically grounded [guidelines](#) towards ending complicity with apartheid, genocide, and grave war crimes in the culture sector. A specific guide on how this applies to Israeli film and cinema can be found [here](#).

**Queercircle** is a charity founded to fill the gaps and advocate for systemic change where other arts, health and education institutions fail or actively perpetuate harm. Queercircle published the 2025 report [\*Let's Create Change: Artistic Freedom in a Time of Genocide and Rising Fascism\*](#) exposing a growing climate of censorship, funding pressures and political influence across the UK arts sector, particularly in relation to Palestine and trans rights.