



# Hexham & District Photographic Society

## Equality Policy

Version 1.0: Adopted April 2018

1. Hexham & District Photographic Society (HPS) supports the principle of equal opportunities in club membership and its management. The Society works to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of ability, age, gender, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or racial origin.
2. Membership is open to all on this basis and HPS opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. All persons are welcomed at the Society and are actively encouraged to participate in the organisation and implementation of Society activities to promote the broadest umbrella interest of photography.
3. HPS want all members and visitors to feel comfortable and welcome when participating in club activities. To that end, all visiting speakers and judges are expected to treat all members with respect and to take care that their comments do not cause offence with respect to issues of age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. Members should treat all other members with respect and politeness at all times, either face-to-face or in email correspondence.
4. HPS believes it is in the best interests of the Society and its members to ensure that human resources, talents and skills available throughout the community are considered when appointing officers and committee members. To this end, within the framework of the law, we are committed, wherever practicable to maintain a membership that broadly reflects the local community in which we operate.
5. Anyone breaching these requirements may be asked to leave the club. Anyone with a grievance against another member should, in all cases, approach the President or another Committee Member and make them aware of the situation. The Committee will investigate and take action if necessary. Individual members should not take matters into their own hands and initiate conflict.
6. In order to implement this equality policy, HPS will
  - a. Provide written guidance on the 'Principles of Equality' for all members and officers of the club
  - b. Monitor the existing membership and the application and effects of the policy

- c. Examine and review existing procedures for the selection of committee members and
  - d. officers of the club
  - e. Develop mechanisms for resolving grievances about unfair discrimination and harassment
  - f. Review the policy annually
  - g. HPS Committee members fully support this policy statement. All members are responsible for playing their part in achieving its objectives.
7. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

## Principles of Equality

There are three categories of discrimination: direct, indirect and positive:

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person, in a group of people with the same or similar circumstances, is treated less favourably than the others in the group because of their race, gender, disability or sexuality.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs where the effect of certain requirements, provision or practices imposed by an organisation has an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other. Indirect discrimination generally occurs when a rule or condition, which is applied equally to everyone, can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group; the rule is to their advantage and it cannot be justified on other grounds.
- **Positive discrimination** is in favour of those who were formerly discriminated against, especially in the provision of social and educational facilities and employment opportunities.

The HPS Equality Policy ensures that its members, visiting speakers and judges, guests and attendees at Society events are not discriminated against on the basis of any of the following:

- race, colour, ethnic group or national origin
- gender or marital status
- disability
- sexuality or sexual orientation
- age
- employment status
- actual/suspected HIV/AIDS
- religion and faith
- unrelated criminal offences/ex-offenders (subject to any legal or public interest constraints)
- responsibilities for children or dependents

**Harassment** can be described as inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact, which may cause offence i.e. mental or physical anxiety or hurt to an individual:

- It may be related to gender, race disability, sexuality, age, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of an individual.

- Under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 1994, harassment was made a criminal offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to six months.

**Victimisation** can be described as treating an individual less favourably than one would treat others because the individual has made a complaint of discrimination, given evidence about such a complaint or raised a concern under the Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998.

**'Positive action'** refers to a number of methods designed to counteract the effects of discrimination and to help eradicate stereotyping. It can be initiatives or activities that attempt to redress imbalances by providing extra help, doing things in a different way or promoting opportunities in targeted places and to targeted groups. Under this broad meaning, positive action may include actions such as the introduction of discriminatory selection procedures, and training programmes or policies aimed at preventing sexual harassment. An example of positive action being taken is the employment of a female coach to lead a session aimed at women, to specifically encourage uptake and participation by female players.

**Prejudice** is literally pre-judging someone. It is usually led by negative, irrational feelings, resulting from preconceived attitudes and opinions.

**Stereotyping** is grouping or labelling people because they are members of a particular 'visible' group, and assuming that they have particular traits that are considered to be characteristics of that group.

**Dignity** is about respectful, responsible, fair and humane behaviour, something that is reflected in the Society constitution.

**Disadvantage** is where, as a result of discrimination, an individual or group is deprived of some or all resources and opportunities. This may affect people directly or indirectly.

**Social exclusion** is when people or areas suffer from one or a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, high crime environments or lack of facilities.