

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

### **for all members of the Society of Garden Designers**

### **February 2022**

**The SGD is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our membership and eliminating unlawful discrimination.**

The aim is for our membership to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each member to feel respected and able to perform at their best.

The SGD membership - in providing Garden Design and associated services - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all members, regardless of level of membership.
- Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in membership; eligibility, support and mentorship, registration process, access to training and development, representation, or any other aspect of membership.

The SGD commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the Society, as they are good practice and make professional sense.
- Create a culture in the Society free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued.  
This commitment includes informing members of the Society about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include members conducting themselves in a manner that supports the Society in providing equal opportunities, and preventing bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All members should understand they, as well as the Council, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their membership, against fellow members, customers, suppliers and the public.

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by members, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the Society's activities, and member's own practices.
- Details of the Society's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found at [SGD Complaints Procedure](#). This includes with whom a member should raise a grievance.
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under Section 1.5 of the SGD's Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>, and appropriate action will be taken.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress accessible to all members, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the standing and professionalism of the organisation.
- Decisions concerning members being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).<sup>2</sup>
- Review membership practices and procedures annually to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the membership regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. This will primarily take the form of a survey of the membership every 2 years.
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, review them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully approved by the Council on behalf of the membership. Ongoing efforts are being made to align this policy with those of other organisations in associated industries such as LI, APL, BALI, RHS, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> [SGD Code of Conduct](#) 1.5 The Society will not tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour; you and all members have a duty to act in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, and therefore have a duty:

- a) to treat members, persons or group of persons with dignity at all times; and
- b) not to discriminate against or harass other members, persons or group of persons.

<sup>2</sup> [Equality Act 2010](#) The exception applies where being of a particular sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age – or not being a transsexual person, married or a civil partner – is a requirement for the work, and the person whom it is applied to does not meet it (or, except in the case of sex, does not meet it to the reasonable satisfaction of the person who applied it). The requirement must be crucial to the post, and not merely one of several important factors. It also must not be a sham or pretext. In addition, applying the requirement must be proportionate so as to achieve a legitimate aim.