

GENDER REASSIGNMENT POLICY

1 SCOPE

This policy sets out The Order of Women Freemasons approach to the issues raised for Freemasonry by gender reassignment. It is intended to help guide Lodges in their decision making. It does not impose binding rules and although it gives some general guidance on discrimination law it does not constitute legal advice.

This policy does not attempt to address all the issues relating to gender which may arise as gender reassignment and gender transition become more prevalent in a changing society and when they do they will need to be addressed in accordance with Masonic principles of lawfulness, kindness and tolerance.

2 GENERAL

It is important that any situation involving gender reassignment of a Freemason is treated with the utmost compassion and sensitivity and that the individual is supported throughout the process.

If a Freemason who is a member of The Order of Women Freemasons wishes to change gender and become a man we expect that the Freemason would receive the full support of their brethren. The privacy of the individual should be respected and there will normally be no requirement to inform the applicable Grand Inspector or the Grand Secretary about this change.

3 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

A candidate for admission to Freemasonry under the jurisdiction of The Order of Women Freemasons must be a woman. Should a person who has undergone gender reassignment and has become a woman apply to become a Freemason then her application must be processed in the same way as for any other female candidate.

Any qualified candidate for admission may be proposed for membership of a private Lodge in accordance with the provisions in the Rules contained in the Book of Constitutions. No candidate should be subjected to questions about their gender which could make them feel uncomfortable.

4 CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP

A Freemason who after initiation ceases to be a woman does not cease to be a Freemason. We expect that Freemasons will act with compassion and sensitivity towards their fellow Freemasons.

No Freemason should engage in unwanted conduct relating to another Freemason, including a Freemason's actual or perceived gender reassignment or gender transition. Such conduct would not only be unmasonic but is also unlawful if it has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.

5 RESIGNATION FROM THE CRAFT

A Freemason who has become a man is not required to resign from the Craft. If a person resigns from the Craft then they and their dependants might no longer be eligible for some of the benefits provided by the Masonic Charities now or in the future.

6 EXCLUSION FROM A LODGE

A Lodge may vote to exclude any member for sufficient cause. The following grounds would constitute unlawful discrimination and so could never constitute sufficient cause:

- a. The fact that a member has legally become a man.
- b. A mistaken belief that a member has legally become a man.
- c. The fact that a member is in the process of transitioning from female to male
or
- d. A mistaken belief that a member is in the process of transitioning from female to male.

Similarly, a Lodge must not attempt to persuade a member to resign from the Lodge or discriminate against a member based on any of these grounds. A Lodge must not at any time require a member to prove that they are legally a woman.

7 AMENDMENT

The law and what is considered to be best practice in this area are developing rapidly. This policy may be amended from time to time, so please ensure that you are referring to the latest version.

Date adopted: 2 March 2019