



UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

Calum Macleod
Police Federation of England & Wales
Federation House
Highbury Drive
Leatherhead
Surrey
KT22 7UY

5 February 2018

Dear Mr Macleod

I write with reference to the public comments made by your immediate past chair, Steve White. They were widely reported in the national press including in the Guardian on 31 December 2017. Those comments promoted discrimination against Freemasons and included the statement that "There are people who feel that being a Freemason and a police officer is not necessarily a good idea". One can imagine the furore if Steve White had made the same comments about other organisations, or about specific beliefs, races, genders or sexual orientations, for example.

The Police Federation has a positive duty to promote equality and prevent discrimination. There is a substantial risk that some will regard the public position of the Federation's immediate past chair as reflecting the public stance of the Federation or the ethos and prejudices within the Federation. This is particularly the case in the area of equality because Steve White is the current signatory of the Federation's published Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy (version 3).

The comments of Steve White are inconsistent with the Federation's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy. The policy commits the Federation to eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination and to protect human rights. The policy covers religious discrimination and discrimination on "any other unjustified condition". As you may be aware, all Freemasons must have a belief in a supreme being and so discrimination against Freemasons constitutes indirect religious discrimination as defined by the Equality Act. Membership of Freemasonry is also, of course, an unjustified condition for discrimination within the meaning of the Federation's policy.

The Federation is subject to the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 11 (the freedom of association) and Article 14 (the right not to be discriminated against). The Federation must not discriminate against Freemasons and must not allow itself to be associated with discriminatory comments. To permit a public perception to persist that the Federation is aligned with Steve White's position breaches the human rights of all police officers.



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I am disappointed that the Federation has not distanced itself promptly and emphatically from the public comments of the signatory of its Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and immediate past chair. I note that this failure comprises:

1. A breach of the Federation's duty to promote equality;
2. A breach of the Federation's duty to prevent discrimination;
3. Multiple breaches of the Federation's stated Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy;
4. A breach of Article 11 of the Human Rights Act; and
5. A breach of Article 14 of the Human Rights Act.

Please confirm by return that you will issue a statement clarifying the Federation's position in relation to Steve White's comments. I trust that this will include confirmation that police officers are entitled to freedom of association, including membership of Freemasonry, and that it would be unlawful for the Federation or your members to discriminate against an officer on this basis.

As you will appreciate, this is a matter which has caused substantial concern to many Freemasons, whether or not they are police officers. There is a significant trend towards unlawful and unfair discrimination against Freemasonry and I invite the Federation to fulfil its legal and moral obligations to combat this trend within the Federation and in terms of public perception of the Federation's stance.

Yours sincerely,

David Staples

CEO

The United Grand Lodge of England