

VOLUNTEERING WITH THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Welcome and Thank You for volunteering your time and energy to the Royal Photographic Society (the RPS).

The RPS is a worldwide community of photographers, united by their love of photography. Our shared vision is for everyone to be as inspired, empowered and educated in the art and science of photography as we are.

We can only achieve this thanks to the generosity and expertise of hundreds of volunteers, throughout the UK and internationally. It is a friendly and supportive community, and we hope that your time with us will be rewarding and enjoyable.

In this Handbook, you will find useful information about volunteering for the RPS, setting out what we ask of you, and what you can expect from us in return. If there is anything further you need, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

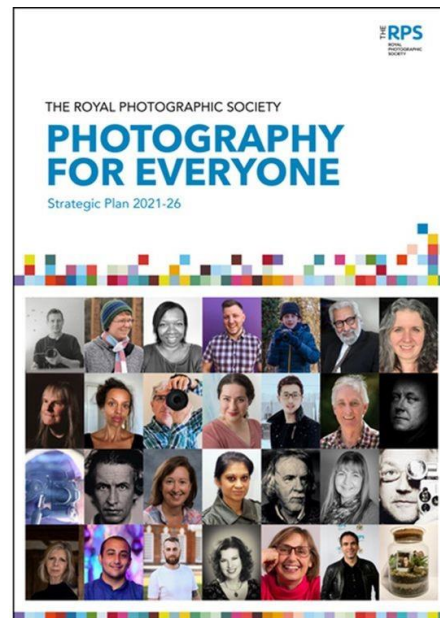
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PHOTOGRAPHY FOR EVERYONE

Throughout our 168-year history, the Royal Photographic Society has grown and evolved alongside the practice of photography. This evolution has been driven by the ambitions of our members, by leaps in technology, and by changes in society.

Today, we recognise there are many new challenges and opportunities, and that photography is as important now as it has ever been.

In 2021, we were therefore delighted to publish *Photography for Everyone*. It was created over many months in consultation with members, staff, trustees, and volunteers throughout the RPS. It consists of twenty-one ambitious programmes, all of which are underpinned by supporting aims around inclusion, environmental and social responsibility, member involvement, financial sustainability and profile raising. Some programmes are a continuation of past activities but eleven are new - providing an opportunity for the RPS to engage with new audiences in order to *inspire*, them support their *creativity* and *connect* them to a wider community of photographers. More info at [RPS Strategy](#)



UK Registered Charity

The RPS is a registered charity and as such there are rules and regulations we need to abide by. We must always have our charitable objectives in mind when putting on activities.

Our charitable aim is “To promote the art and science of photography, which is enacted through an exhibitions programme, workshops and courses, lectures and events, a distinctions and qualifications programme, an annual photography awards ceremony, a Regional and Overseas structure, Special Interest Groups, and by acting as an advocate for photographers and photography.’

Our mission ‘is to educate members of the public by increasing their knowledge and understanding of Photography and in doing so, promote the highest standards of achievement in Photography in order to encourage public appreciation of Photography’.

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is for anyone who has agreed to take on a voluntary role with the RPS. It outlines the principles of the relationship between volunteers and the charity, as well as other basic information.

All volunteering relationships are unique and based largely on trust and shared values. By taking on the role, you agree that there will be no obligation for the RPS to provide you with work, or fulfil obligations associated with employment; and no payment will be made to you, other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses.

Royal Patron

In 1853, the year in which our Society was founded, Queen Victoria became our first Patron and since then we have been humbled and honoured to have enjoyed a long and unbroken line of royal Patrons.

In 1952, following the death of her father, King George VI, the new Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of the Society and remained our Patron for 67 years. In 2019, Queen Elizabeth II passed the Patronage to HRH The Duchess of Cambridge who, now HRH The Duchess of Cornwall and Cambridge, remains our Patron.

[More Info about our Royal Patronage](#)

Volunteer Roles

Volunteers are a vital part of the RPS. Volunteers are involved in all aspects of our work, from putting on events to sitting on the Distinction panels. If you have a passion for photography, we hope we have a role to suit you. Please get in touch to find out more, and to be directed to an active group in your area.



Getting Started

We want to make sure you have everything you need to start volunteering with the RPS. A great place to start is the [Volunteer Area](#). Here you will find all the latest Rules and Regulations for different areas of the organisation, and lots of supporting materials and information to help with your role.

Your main contact on the RPS Staff Team will be our Member and Volunteer Support Coordinators Laura Gardner and Janina Pilch. You can reach them in a seven day a week coverage via email volunteers@rps.org or you can call on 0117 316 4476.

In some cases, your contact maybe another staff member, for example if you are doing work with the Distinctions Team.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Equality, diversion and inclusion are fundamental to the RPS's strategy of Photography for Everyone and to its desire to reflect the diversity within the community.

It is important that our culture promotes respect for each other and values individual differences, regardless of a person's ethnicity, their sexual and gender identity, age or any aspect of their identity, background or circumstance.

We will not condone, tolerate or ignore any form of discrimination or unacceptable behaviour.

The age for volunteering with the RPS is 18 years. In some cases, under 18's can volunteer with parental consent. There is no upper age limit to volunteer with us!

Data Protection

All information held on our volunteers is in line with [GDPR](#). You have the right to access any personal information we have on you.



Whilst volunteering with us, you will be in a position of privilege and may come into commercially sensitive information or information relating to staff or other volunteers that is not for the general public.

As a volunteer we expect you to follow our data protection policy, and ensure all information is always kept private and confidential.



Health and Safety

We are committed to ensuring your safety and wellbeing whilst you are volunteering with us. We expect our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment for themselves and others.

- Make sure all events have been planned with health and safety in mind and that a risk assessment has been completed. This is compulsory, as it covers yourself and the RPS if an accident occurs at one of your events.
- Be aware of action to take in an emergency, and who you need to contact.
- Accident report forms, risk assessments and Health and Safety policies can all be found in the volunteer-area of the RPS website.
- Whilst volunteering for the RPS you are fully insured under our public liability insurance.

Our commitment to volunteers



We want your time volunteering with us to be enjoyable and rewarding. We take our responsibilities towards you very seriously. As a volunteer with the RPS, you are also a representative of the Society, and we ask that you act appropriately.



We will:

- Provide adequate information, training, resources and assistance to enable you to meet the responsibilities of your role(s).
- Respect the relevant skills and experience you bring to the RPS and do our best to adjust to any individual requirements.
- Provide opportunities for you to expand your skills and experience in relation to your role, and to change or take on additional roles.
- Provide feedback on your performance as appropriate.
- Ensure that you are updated on relevant changes to RPS policies and procedures.
- Listen to your ideas/feedback and take action when appropriate.
- Recognise your service and contribution as a volunteer.
- Reimburse agreed out of pocket expenses in accordance with RPS policy.
- Value, respect and work with you to achieve the RPS's aims, as set out in the Strategic Plan.

In return we ask you to:

- Take part in training and familiarise yourself with information and resources relevant to your role(s).
- Perform volunteer duties to the best of your skills and ability.



- Access support when needed and accept constructive comments/feedback.
- Support and act in accordance with the Society's policies, practices, procedures, and management decisions.
- Keep in contact with the RPS, letting the appropriate person know as soon as possible if your circumstances change or if you are unable to fulfil a commitment.

- Work with other volunteers and staff to achieve the RPS's aims, as set out in the Strategic Plan.
- Accept that ultimate responsibility for RPS affairs rests with the board of trustees.
- Always treat RPS staff and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration and appreciation.



Our supportive community

We all want to nurture a supportive and welcoming community for all members, volunteers and staff. The Members' Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers, and you should familiarise yourself with it. You can access a copy via [Governance](#).

We don't anticipate any problems, but if we consider that any volunteer has failed to observe our rules of conduct, we reserve the right to ask volunteers to stand down from their role.



Benefits of volunteering

Volunteering has many benefits including meeting new people, learning new skills and being part of a community.

There have been many studies on the benefits of volunteering on peoples' mental health. It can improve overall wellbeing and also help to protect from mental health problems, by giving the participant some structure and helping boost their self-esteem.

Photography Consent

We may use photographs of volunteers carrying out their roles for promotional purposes, for example on our website or social media. If you don't want us to use your images, please let the Volunteering Manager know or whoever is taking photos at the event.



Social Media

Your Group, Region or Chapter may have social media to help promote your activities and the RPS. Please help ensure that these channels are not used in any way that brings the RPS into disrepute. If you have any concerns about this, please raise these with the Volunteering Manager immediately.

We all hope you enjoy your experience of volunteering for the RPS

Thank you again.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us, and we will do our best to help.



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