

Statement to Members on Public Photography and Recent Government Poster

From the President of the North Wales Photographic Association

Members may be aware of the considerable concern and public discussion generated by a recently released government poster. This poster apparently issued by the 'Home Office' and targeted at Asylum Seekers.

I stress that I am not informed of the origination nor intended purpose of this poster.

The content of this poster appears to suggest that photographing or filming people in public places may, in itself, lead to arrest. Understandably, this wording has caused anxiety among photographers, clubs, journalists, educators and members of the public who lawfully practise photography in streets, parks and other public spaces.

Let me be clear: the Association does not support any wording that misstates or oversimplifies the law. In the United Kingdom, photography in a public place is not automatically unlawful. Members of the public and the media do not require a permit simply to photograph or film in public places, and police guidance confirms that officers have no general power to stop people from filming or photographing incidents or police personnel in public.

The real legal boundaries are more specific. Photography may become problematic where it involves harassment, obstruction, trespass, restricted or sensitive locations, misuse of images, threatening behaviour, or circumstances where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy. Separate offences also exist in relation to intimate images and other forms of misuse. These are important protections, but they are not the same as a general ban on photographing people in public.

We are therefore concerned that the poster, as worded, risks spreading confusion rather than providing reassurance. It may unintentionally encourage members of the public, security staff or even officials to challenge lawful photographers on an incorrect basis. That is not helpful for community relations, public confidence or the safety of photographers carrying out legitimate work.

At the same time, I urge all members to respond calmly and professionally. If challenged, be courteous, explain your purpose where appropriate, and avoid escalating any confrontation. Knowing our rights should go hand in hand with exercising good judgement, respecting privacy, and showing sensitivity towards vulnerable people, children, private premises and situations of distress.

The Association will be conferring with the PAGB, our national UK body, to ask that the poster and any accompanying guidance be reviewed and corrected so that it reflects the law accurately. We will also continue to make practical information available to members on public photography, police powers, private property, privacy, and responsible conduct.

Until that clarification is issued, members should not be deterred from lawful photography in public places. Photography is an essential part of culture, journalism, art, history and civic life. We will continue to defend that freedom responsibly, accurately and firmly.

I strongly request that if a member is challenged in any way as a direct result of this specific poster that you inform your NWPB Club Representative of the circumstances, in detail, who in turn should pass the details to our secretary.

Charles Meadows

President

North Wales Photographic Association

ORIGINAL POSTER:



 Home Office

**Asylum
Consequences
of Behaviour**

Do not photograph or film people in public

In the UK, you should not take pictures or videos of someone without their permission.

This includes taking pictures or videos in public spaces, like streets or parks, or in private spaces, like at home.

Sharing sexual pictures or videos of someone without their permission is a serious crime.

 If you do these things, you could be arrested by the police. This could affect your asylum support and your asylum claim.

 If someone has taken or shared images of you without your permission, you can report this to the police. Reporting will not negatively affect your asylum claim.

 Non-emergency police: **101**
In an emergency, always call **999**