

SECTION 8: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Beales Hotels is committed to a policy of treating all its employees and job applicants equally. No employee or potential employee shall receive less favourable treatment or consideration on the grounds of discrimination – i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity – known as ‘protected characteristics’, or be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment or Beales Hotels requirements that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.

Every Director and member of management and all employees are instructed that:

1. Beales Hotels will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability.
2. All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of Beales Hotels equal opportunities policy.
3. Special responsibility for the practical application of Beales Hotels equal opportunities policy falls upon managers and supervisors involved in recruitment, selection, promotion and training of employees. These special responsibilities give rise to training needs for which provision will be made.
4. Beales Hotels grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been unfairly discriminated against, with the addition of a prior and informal stage.
5. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the policy will be treated as gross misconduct, as will sexual or racial harassment.
6. In the case of any doubt or concern about the application of the policy in any particular instance any member of staff or employee should consult their General Manager.
7. This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated as required.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CODE OF PRACTICE AND GUIDANCE NOTES

OBJECTIVES

Beales Hotels has introduced an Equal Opportunities Policy. We regard this as a commitment to make full use of the talents and resources of all our employees and to provide a healthy environment, which will encourage good and productive working relations within the organisation. This Code of Practice describes how the policy is to be applied throughout the Company.

We are particularly concerned to achieve the following objectives:

- a) When applying for jobs, there is no discrimination against any person on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity (protected characteristics).
- b) All promotion is strictly on the basis of ability to do the job, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity (protected characteristics).

The Code of Practice on the application of the policy provides those with responsibilities defined in the policy, specific actions they must take so that the application of the policy is in a thorough and consistent manner.

RECRUITMENT

The recruitment process must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of experience and qualifications.

It is against company policy and against the Law to discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of protected characteristics at any stage of the recruitment process.



Check that:

- a) All jobs are made open to all applicants. Any queries should be referred to Head Office.
- b) No assumptions or pre-judgements are made by managers or recruiters about the suitability of either sex or any race for a particular job. For example, preference of co-workers, customers, or suppliers must not be pre-supposed. It is not to be assumed that jobs involving heavy physical labour, late hours, travel, or unpleasant surroundings are necessarily unsuitable for women, or that jobs demanding manual dexterity, e.g., the operation of VDU's, are unsuitable for men.
- c) No decision is made, or preference stated, in advance regarding the outcome of the recruitment process.
- d) All applications are to be given equal consideration.
- e) No discrimination is made in the terms of which a job is offered, e.g. pay or holidays.
- f) Applicants and existing staff and made aware of the Company's policy and practice on recruitment. The Company Policy Statement will be included in the Company handbook.
- g) Managers are advised and trained on the implementation of the company's recruitment policy.

RECRUITMENT PUBLICITY

Recruitment publicity must positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people.

It must show that the Company offers opportunities at all levels to people of either sex, any race etc. (for all protected characteristics) and it should avoid any stereo typing of roles. Recruitment solely, or in the first instance, by 'word of mouth', or through recommendations of existing employees must adhere to the Company's recruitment policy and Equal Opportunities policy.

Check that:

- a) Copies of the Company's written Equal Opportunities Policy are given to all the recruitment and advertising agencies with which we deal.
- b) In all recruitment and publicity literature and in all internal advertisements, job titles and job content are presented without bias either of gender or race.

AGE RESTRICTIONS

The setting of age limits as a matter of general recruitment policy or as criteria of any specific job must be justified and non-discriminatory.

Check that:

- a) Any age restriction is demonstrably valid.
- b) The setting of age limits is non-discriminatory. An example of discrimination in this respect is to set a requirement for the age range during which many women have dropped out of the labour market to rear their families.

MOBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Mobility requirements can cause problems for all employees. We recognise that the whole family is affected if an employee's job requires him/her to travel extensively or to move. We are therefore concerned to keep such requirements to a minimum and to devise alternatives for any employee who has difficulty in meeting such requirements.

Check that:

Requirements for travel or removal are demonstrably valid and non-discriminatory.

TRAINING

Training is provided for our employees in order to increase their knowledge and skills. This has the advantage to the company of greater efficiency and potential, while to the employee it opens up new opportunities and prospects.

All training course materials must reflect our policy on Equal Opportunities.

Check that:

- a) Training courses and procedures are continually revised and updated.
- b) Training courses and materials are free from bias and do not discriminate, e.g. by showing women or black people, ethnic minority groups or disabled people in inferior roles.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

We are concerned that career paths within the company should reflect the situation in the workplace.

As a company, we are committed to ensure that all employees are provided with opportunities to develop their potential.

Check that:

- a) Development policies on promotion and transfer are continually revised and updated.
- b) Qualifications and criteria for promotion and transfer are justified.
- c) Policies make it quite clear that promotion and transfer are open to all suitably qualified and experienced personnel.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Equal Opportunities in the workplace will be achieved by the implementation of the policies and programmes outlined in this Code of Practice.

As a safeguard, a grievance procedure is to be available to individual employees who feel that they have received unfair treatment in any of the following:

Their right to apply for jobs for which they are qualified or have the experience.

Selection for interview.

The interview process itself.

Training and development opportunities

Terms and Conditions of Employment

The grievance procedure may also be invoked in cases of alleged sexual or racial harassment. Sexual or racial harassment is defined as un-reciprocated and unwelcome comments or actions, which are found objectionable and could threaten an employee's job security or create an intimidating working environment.

An employee with a grievance under Equal Opportunities should follow the procedure below:

1. Informal Stage

Before taking a decision to invoke the Procedure, employees should have the right to approach a senior manager for informal, confidential advice.

2. Formal Stages

In order to proceed, the employee makes known his or her grievance to the Hotel General Manager. This should be done at the earliest opportunity.

3. If the grievance cannot be resolved at this stage, the normal grievance procedure should be followed. The employee should state that this grievance relates to equal opportunities.

4. This procedure will be carried out in the strictest confidence and will not prejudice the employee's current employment or future career prospects.

NOTE: Care should be taken to deal effectively and seriously with all grievances. It should not be assumed that they are made by people who are over-sensitive about discrimination.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION

1. Communication

Formal communication is undertaken both inside the Company and to external organisations, who assist in personnel and training activities. The policy will therefore:



- a) Be included in the company handbook.
- b) Be sent to all recruitment agencies and like bodies.
- c) Be distributed to all involved in the recruitment and selection of staff.

2. Monitoring

All Managers will undertake monitoring of external and internal selection.

3. Review

The working of the policy will be reviewed as necessary.

4. Amendment

Amendments to policy or its application will be made in the light of operating experience and the review procedure.

5. Responsibility for Implementation

All employees at every level in the Company, but particularly the Directors, Managers and Supervisors, have certain responsibilities as a result of our policy.

Beales Hotels expects members of its management team to ensure that this policy and procedure is adhered to at all times.

DIGNITY AT WORK

Beales Hotels seeks to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all its employees and deplores all forms of harassment. The Company acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect and that all allegations of harassment are dealt with as quickly as possible and investigated impartially and in confidence following the procedure set out below.



Discrimination – i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity – known as ‘protected characteristics’.

All forms of harassment at work are unacceptable and may be considered unlawful under:

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1997

Intentional or unintentional racial or sexual harassment is also a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment or a fine.

Both the Company and the harasser may be held liable for such actions and may be required to pay damages. Harassment can reduce the effectiveness of the Company by creating a threatening environment and increasing sickness absence and labour turnover. Women and men have the right to work in an environment free from intimidation. It is recognised that harassment may take place within or outside the working environment, e.g. at a Company-related social event and within or outside normal working hours.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment takes many forms, from relatively mild banter to actual sexual contact. Employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes sexual harassment, but they must recognise that what is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature by one employee to another.

EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT INCLUDE:

- Insensitive jokes or pranks
- Lewd comments about appearance
- Unnecessary body contact
- Displays of sexually offensive material, e.g. pin-ups
- Requests for sexual favours
- Speculation about a person's private life and sexual activities
- Threatened or actual sexual violence
- Threat of dismissal, loss of promotion etc. for refusal of sexual favours.

RACIAL HARASSMENT

Racial harassment can also take many forms, from relatively minor abuse to actual physical violence. Examples of harassment include:

- Insensitive jokes related to race
- Racially motivated pranks
- Deliberate exclusion from conversation
- Abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour
- Displaying abusive writing and pictures.

The examples above are not exhaustive. Some forms of harassment may constitute Gross Misconduct depending on the circumstances of the case in question.

1. Beales Hotels prohibits the display of sexually offensive material – e.g. pin-ups and posters and will, if necessary, ensure that the Hotel premises are inspected and offending material removed.
2. Beales Hotels recognises the sensitive nature of complaints of sexual harassment. Female employees who wish to discuss such complaints in confidence should contact a female senior member of the management team. Male employees should contact a male senior member of the management team. If any employee has difficulty in making an appropriate contact, the Training & Development Manager can be contacted for assistance.

Any employee experiencing any type of harassment should pursue his/her complaint through the Company Grievance Procedure wherever possible.

INFORMAL REMEDY

Employees who are subjects of harassment are advised to make it clear to their harasser that the behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. They may also choose to put their complaint in writing to the harasser.

FORMAL PROCEDURE

Where informal methods fail, or serious harassment occurs, employees are advised to bring a formal complaint in line with our Grievance procedure and may seek assistance in doing so. The complaint should be directed to the Hotel General Manager and may be verbal or in writing. The Hotel General Manager will, at some stage, take a written statement from the complainant.

The Manager handling the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation as quickly as possible, maintaining confidentiality at all times. All employees involved in the investigation are expected to respect the need for confidentiality. Failure to do so will be considered a disciplinary offence.

In all cases of harassment, the complainant may be accompanied by a work colleague of his/her choice throughout the procedure and during the Hearing.

