

# Equality Policy



HARROGATE FOOD & DRINK CO.

## Purpose

The aim of this policy is to communicate our commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity within the Harrogate Food and Drink Co. (the Company).

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against due to any of the characteristics protected under any relevant anti-discrimination legislation. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination. We recognise that the provision of equality in the workplace is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equality policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

## Scope

The policy applies equally to all employees who work for, or who apply to work for the organisation.

## Key principles

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for everyone.
- Promoting an environment where all employees are treated with respect.
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under any legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Prompt and effective action to deal with discrimination whenever it occurs.
- Identifying and removing any barriers to equal employment opportunity through appropriate training and communication.
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate.

## Equal opportunities and employment law

As an employer and a service provider we have a legal obligation to implement the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The principle sources of non-discrimination and equal treatment legislation relates to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, which includes:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

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## Forms of Discrimination

There are essentially 4 types of discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Applies to all protected characteristics listed above. Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perceptive discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see associative discrimination below).
- **Indirect Discrimination:** Applies to age, race, religion or belief, political belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, disability and gender reassignment.
- Indirect discrimination can occur when a condition, rule, policy or even a practice is implemented in the company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share the above protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** is unwelcome conduct that violates, or is intended to violate the dignity of people at work and creates an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to either the recipient and/or a witness. Unlawful harassment may be verbal, physical or visual and may occur on the following grounds (these examples do not represent an exhaustive list):
  - **Sexual harassment** can include demeaning comments about a person's appearance; indecent remarks; questions about a person's sex life; sexual demands by a member of the same sex or opposite sex; name-calling with demeaning terminology which is gender-specific; or unwelcome physical contact and other conduct of a sexual nature.
  - Harassment on the grounds of **sexual orientation** is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed sexual orientation. Such behaviour includes name-calling, stereotyping, assault, verbal abuse, actual or threatened unwanted disclosure of sexuality, derogatory comments, excluding same-sex partners from social events or intrusive questioning about a person's domestic circumstances.
  - Harassment on the grounds of **race or ethnic background** may take the form of verbal insults or ridicule, racist comments, racist 'jokes', banter or taunts, graffiti or racist literature, or picking on an individual unnecessarily because of their ethnic or racial background.
  - Harassment on the grounds of **religion or belief** can include ridiculing items worn for religious reasons, denigrating cultural customs and dismissive treatment of requests for holidays for religious or cultural festivals, or derisory comments against an individual's beliefs.
  - **Disability harassment** may take the form of insults or 'jokes' based on disability, or verbal abuse, including abuse relating to particular medical conditions.
  - Harassment on the grounds of **age** may take the form of exclusion from social events, 'jokes' based on age, or unwelcome remarks about appearance or verbal abuse.
  - **Victimisation:** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because they have made a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or they have given evidence about such a complaint.

## Unlawful pressure

This arises when a person puts pressure on another person to carry out an act of discrimination. If an employee feels they are being pressured into discriminating against an individual then this should be reported to their Line Manager or another Senior Manager. If an employee is unable to obtain acceptable instructions then the matter must be reported to a member of senior management for further action. Full written notes should be taken of all such conversations and incidents.

## Responsibilities

It is every employee's obligation to comply with the Equality policy. Whilst the Company is responsible for the adoption, implementation and monitoring of related policies; each employee holds the responsibility to ensure that discrimination does not occur. It is the specific responsibility of all managers to ensure that this policy is fully implemented, whilst all employees should be aware of their responsibilities and the legal obligations that fall upon them and upon the Company.

All individuals have a duty of care to treat each other with respect and not to discriminate as defined above. Furthermore, if any employee witnesses conduct which goes against the Equality policy it is their responsibility to report this to their Line Manager in the first instance. Failure to comply with the policy will result in disciplinary action. Unlawful discrimination against any person will be regarded as gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal. In situations where it is

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believed that discrimination has occurred, any complaint will be instigated initially through the company grievance procedure.

In certain circumstances, employees may be personally liable for a breach of the relevant legislation. An employee who discriminates against an applicant or a colleague is personally considered to have acted unlawfully and may have to appear before an Industrial Tribunal should he or she become the subject of a complaint. It is therefore vital that all employees are conversant with the Company's policy, the requirements of the law and the consequences of acting improperly. By adhering to the Company's established procedures and training methods, unintentional discrimination will be avoided.