



Title of Policy:	Section:
Equality and Diversity	Human Resources

Purpose

To outline the commitment of Bespoke Guardians to equal opportunities in all aspects of its operations.

Statement

We are committed to providing employment opportunities and services on an equal and fair basis and commit to follow the codes of practice published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. These obligations protect people from unlawful behaviour, for example, discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The above are defined as “protected characteristics”, and Bespoke Guardians will seek to establish and maintain fair treatment for everyone who works for the Company, receives services from the Company and those who supply goods and services to the Company. We expect everyone associated with the business to behave entirely within the law and gives zero tolerance to inappropriate behaviour. Everyone must be treated fairly, with dignity and with respect.

The commitment from every employee in the Company to the aims and ideals of this policy is fundamental to our success, and any employee who feels that these ideals are not being adequately followed are required to make their feelings known without delay so that corrective measures, where necessary, can be implemented. Employees who discriminate unfairly may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Procedure and Guidance

Bespoke Guardians’ reputation is a key ingredient in relation to whether we are successful or not. Being recognised as both an employer and provider of services on an equal and non-discriminatory basis will help develop and enhance our reputation within the community we serve.

Equally, the identification, promotion and monitoring of good practice is likely to benefit the Company and result in significant benefits, such as:



- Greater employee satisfaction, which in turn helps attract new staff and retain existing employees
- Reduced recruitment costs
- Increased productivity

Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination takes many forms, and it is important to understand how the law sees many different forms of discrimination which might occur in the workplace, affecting both Young Persons and employees of the Company.

The principal forms are:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination arising from disability

The clause in the 2010 Equality Act provides that it is discrimination to treat a disabled person in a particular way which, because of his or her disability, amounts to treating him or her badly and the treatment cannot be shown to be justified. For this type of discrimination to occur, the employer or other person must know, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the disabled person has a disability. Also, the person who treats the disabled person in that way may still be liable for discrimination under this provision, whether or not the duty to make reasonable adjustments has been complied with.

The protection by association could have implications in relation to requests for time off or flexible working, parking permits for student parents with disabled children, etc.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is when a condition, rule, policy or even a practice applies to everyone, but has a disproportionate impact on people with a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if we can demonstrate that we acted reasonably for a sound business reason: i.e., that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful. Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that we have looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision we make.

Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual". Employees are able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of



perception and association.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

The Company's practical steps to ensure fairness for all

Information and Instruction

Bespoke Guardians will ensure, through the circulation of this policy document, that all employees are made aware of the importance of equal treatment for all, regardless of any particular characteristics they may possess. The Company's Young Persons will also be made aware of the Company's policy, and that whilst Young Persons may rightfully expect to receive equal treatment from the Company's employees, then they are expected in turn to treat our employees with the dignity and respect they deserve and in a non-discriminatory fashion. Where further instruction and training is necessary, then the Company will make suitable arrangements.

Recruitment and management of staff

The Company's reputation is enhanced where we can demonstrate a clear strategy aimed at encouraging a diverse workforce, and one which reflects the local labour market, and the diversity of Young Persons. In order to achieve this goal, the Company will demonstrate a clear understanding of how to avoid discrimination in employment through the creation and use of recruitment tools which:

- a) are equally relevant to the widest range of job applicants; and
- b) do not utilise data which is not essential to any early recruitment decisions (e.g., call for interview), such as sex, ethnic origin etc.

Job adverts will avoid the use of language which might suggest inappropriate and unlawful intent to discriminate. This will help ensure that selection for employment will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

Employee selection criteria will proceed purely according to the merits and abilities of the applicant to perform the tasks and duties listed in the relevant job description. Employee recruitment and selection procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that the elements of this Policy are maintained.

Staff will be promoted on their individual ability to do the job and performance. All staff will have equal and fair access to learning and development as identified through their performance appraisal.

All employees should clearly feel that decisions about recruitment, training, development, promotion, or indeed any aspect of their employment are based purely on merit, and not as a result of unfair discrimination. If an employee feels that they have been treated unfairly in any aspect of the employment relationship, then they are encouraged to raise the matter with their line manager or HR.

People with a disability

The Company attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people and will:



- make reasonable adjustments to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours etc.
- include disabled people in training/development programmes.
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be considered equally and fairly alongside all other candidates.

Monitoring and Review

Bespoke Guardians understands that it is important to be able to confirm that its policy is being followed appropriately, and will monitor this through appropriate means, such as the collection of key data, discussions with employees and Young Persons, monitoring and review of complaints, or expressions of dissatisfaction, etc. Where improvements need to be made, then an action plan will be developed and implemented.

In order to ensure a fair working environment for all employees, discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated. Bespoke Guardians provides facilities for any employee who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly within the scope of this policy to address the matter through a documented and established grievance procedure. Each complaint will be thoroughly investigated and where it is identified that an individual has treated a colleague unfairly, they will be subject to our disciplinary procedure.

This policy statement will be kept under regular review by the Senior Management Team to ensure that it remains consistent with legal imperatives and good practice.

Policy Reviewed on Date of Implementation by the Following Company Officer:

Full name:

Robert Firmin

Job Title:

Managing Director

Signature:

R. Firmin

Reviewed by Lisa Fife 26th April 2024 – general update