

EQUALITY POLICY

Objectives

Bennett Architectural is committed to the principle of Equality for all in Employment. Therefore, it is the intention of this policy to ensure:

- That no applicant or employee either directly or indirectly receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their religious belief, sex, disability, marital status, age, race, sexual orientation or by virtue of the applicant having a criminal record.
- That no applicant or employee is placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
- That no applicant or employee is placed in a position where they are made to feel uncomfortable due to the actions of another towards a fellow colleague/employee.

Policy

To meet these objectives the company will:

Recruitment:

Ensure a fair recruitment process is undertaken by providing its managers with relevant training and coaching.

Attract applicants using a variety of methods to enable a fair cross section of labour availability. Each method will be chosen subject to the type and level of role being recruited. Suitable methods of attraction may include advertising in industry specific trade magazines, local press, and using employment agencies. Other methods may also be considered depending on local labour availability, the type of role(s) being recruited for, and business needs.

Ensure that the wording of advertisements encourages applications from underrepresented groups and does not exclude groups by placing unjustified restrictions.

Select applicants based on their level of competence in performing the key tasks of the role, and/or their personal aptitude. Competence will be measured in terms of demonstrated skill, knowledge and experience against predetermined selection criteria which sets out the type of person necessary to fulfil the role as identified in the person specification. Personal aptitude will be measured by psychological testing.

Ensure applicants have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments, should these be required, to enable them to attend interview and/or take part in selection tasks.

Refrain from the use of general health related questions. However, questions in the following circumstances may be used;

- To help the manager decide whether reasonable adjustments during the selection process are required by the applicant
- To help the manager decide whether an applicant can carry out a function that is essential (intrinsic) to the job
- To monitor diversity among people making applications for jobs
- To take positive action to assist disabled people
- To assure the manager that a candidate has the disability where the job genuinely requires the jobholder to have a disability.

Promote personnel from within the company wherever possible, ensuring existing employees have an opportunity to apply for positions as they become available. Employees will be selected based on their competence and aptitude to carry out the alternative role.

All employees promoted into a different role will undergo an appropriate induction for that role and will be offered the opportunity to receive mentoring for at least the first six months.

Ensure all new employees go through an appropriate and applicable induction process which has been tailored to suit their specific role. The effectiveness of the induction process for each employee will be monitored and results reviewed annually.

Dispute Resolution:

Ensure employees have the opportunity to speak confidentially with a colleague or senior member of staff if they feel they have been bullied, threatened, harassed, victimised, and/or discriminated against in any way, or they are associated with someone who has been bullied, threatened, harassed, victimised or discriminated against and this has had a significant effect on their working environment and caused them to feel aggrieved. Any allegation of this nature will be treated sensitively and with respect to maintain a safe working environment for all concerned. All allegations of this nature will be fully investigated, and where it is found there is a case to answer, disciplinary action will be taken against the alleged perpetrator.

Ensure all employees have the opportunity to raise a grievance regarding any aspect of their working conditions, or employee relations, at any time during their employment with the company. They have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any formal meeting, and they will receive a copy of any minutes taken. Once a decision has been made regarding the outcome of a grievance investigation, the employee who has raised the grievance has the opportunity to appeal against that decision if they believe it to be fundamentally wrong.

Not allow an employee to be subject to any form of victimisation or disadvantage because they have previously raised a grievance or disclosed a wrongful and/or unlawful act(s) within the company.

Invoke the disciplinary procedure if an investigation has revealed that misconduct, or gross misconduct may have taken place. In all cases, the person chairing the disciplinary meeting will not pre-determine the outcome, but will first listen to the evidence, consider any witness statements, and hear the employee's defence against an accusation. A decision will only be made during an adjournment of a suitable length of time to consider the case.

All dismissals will be carried out in a fair and consistent manner, as determined by the ACAS Code of Practice. Any redundancies and/or short time working, or layoffs will be subject to selection criteria which shall be determined at the time to reflect the areas of the business where a reduction of staff is being considered.

Communication:

Ensure all staff are made aware of this Policy and of the requirement to comply with it. This is addressed by the production of a Staff Handbook, of which all employees have access to a copy. The Equality Policy is also explained during the induction process of new, transferred, and/or promoted employees.

Enable staff to receive suitable training and guidance during the induction and/or probationary period, to ensure that they understand the need for equality at work.

Ensure all employees are given the opportunity to drive their potential, in terms of professional and personal development through encouragement, engagement, training and development, as well as careful assessment during the appraisal process.

Monitoring:

Monitor the effectiveness of the Equality Policy and its associated procedures against the model of best personnel practice. Monitoring will specifically include recruitment and promotions, training and development, performance management, and dispute resolution.

Use such monitoring methods as deemed suitable by the company. This may include staff survey, questionnaires, feedback forms, statistic review, and formal or informal interviews with staff.

Review the Equality Policy annually to ensure it is effective, is being communicated to staff and managers sufficiently, and does not in any way disadvantage any work groups or the Company.

Measure the composition of the workforce against the local labour market and further encourage applicants from different groups if it appears that the company is unfairly balanced in terms of representation of different groups within the community.

Occupational Health:

The wellbeing of our staff is a high priority at Bennett Architectural and to this end we will discharge our obligations in regard to health issues by:

Gathering health information from all staff on commencing work with our company, enabling us to identify any areas of ill health or potential ill health, in order that we may take due consideration of such factors when assessing the risk appertaining to any activity to be carried out by specific members of staff.

Considering the company's activities regularly undertaken and identifying any potential consequential issues regarding ill health which may arise out of such activities.

Consider any pre-existing condition of an employee when identifying individuals for the execution of activities, in particular those regularly undertaken, in order to remove the potential for harm or reduce it to its minimum practicable level.

Provide necessary resources, information and training, to minimize the potential of ill health conditions arising out of our work activities.

Monitor and review any individuals who have indicated a pre-existing condition or inform us of the early signs of such condition, in order that we may mitigate any further worsening of such conditions to the minimum practicable level and consider reasonable adjustments to their role.

A system will be put in place to encourage all employees to monitor their own health and ensure that any problems which arise are notified as early as possible in order that preventative action can be taken.

Responsibility

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy statement and its implementation.

Managers/Directors are responsible for appropriate personnel receiving training and direction in equal opportunities and other company procedures and that practices are reviewed and amended as necessary.

Management and supervisory staff are responsible within their specific area for ensuring that procedures are followed and that no breach of policy occurs.

All employees are required to comply with the policy as part of their Terms and Conditions of Employment. Breach of policy or any act of discrimination or harassment on the part of an employee will be regarded as Gross Misconduct which may warrant dismissal.



Managing Director