

The British Horse Society Equality Policy

Introduction

Diversity is what we achieve when, having understood how people's differences and similarities can be mobilised for the benefit of the individual, the Society and the wider community, we act on that understanding. The Society, being an equal opportunities employer which is fully committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination, aims to embrace the principles of diversity and fairness.

The aims of this policy are:

- to provide equality and fairness for all employees (permanent and temporary) and for all applicants for employment to the Society; and
- to ensure that unfair or unlawful discrimination does not occur in the Society, irrespective of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age or membership/non-membership of a trade union, or any other irrelevant factor.

The Society's Commitment

The Society is committed to diversity and equality in the workplace in the following ways:

- by creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued;
- by upholding the right of every employee to work in an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all, with no form of intimidation, bullying, harassment or victimisation being tolerated;
- by dealing with acts of discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation against employees, visitors or volunteers under the Society's disciplinary procedures. Any employee who is found to have harassed, bullied, discriminated against or victimised a colleague will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal;
- by ensuring that training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff; and

- by regularly reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

Discrimination

Unfair discrimination can arise as a result of prejudice (which means an opinion formed beforehand based on inadequate facts), misconception or stereotyping which influences the treatment of individuals. It can be direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional. Even where unfair treatment does not give rise to a complaint, the effects may be far-reaching and damaging.

Direct discrimination is treating people less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in similar circumstances.

Indirect discrimination arises where everyone is treated in the same way but the treatment adversely affects one group more than another and cannot be objectively justified. (For example, requiring everyone to work full time will normally adversely affect more women than men and will amount to unlawful indirect sex discrimination unless there is a good reason, unrelated to gender, for requiring a particular job has to be done on a full-time basis.

Relevant Legislation

The Society complies with the following related legislation:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Rights Act 1999
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Equality Act 2006

The Society will, of course, comply with any later amendments to these Acts and Regulations, and with future Acts and Regulations that are relevant to BHS.

Responsibilities

Board responsibilities:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented, followed and reviewed when appropriate. The Board is also responsible for anticipating potential breaches and dealing with any breaches which occur.

A member of the Board, designated by the Chairman, will be nominated as the "Board Equality Lead" (BOL). The BOL will ensure that Equality issues are included on the Agenda at Board meetings when appropriate and that the Board takes into consideration the impact on Equality when making decisions.

Once approved, this policy will apply for a maximum of three years before a formal Board review takes place, unless any proposal to the Board, or change in legislation, requires an earlier review and/or amendment.

At time of the formal review, the Board will ensure that all staff, members and volunteers are able to participate in the process. At the conclusion of the review all those who participated, and all those who will be directly affected, will be informed of any changes which are being made.

Chief Executive responsibilities:

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy.

The Chief Executive will delegate to a member of staff, known as the "Office Equality Lead" (OEL), the day to day responsibility for the implementation of this Policy and for the achievement of any Equality-related actions resulting from it. The OEL will work closely with the Human Resources Department, and his or her work programme will be amended to reflect these responsibilities. If required, an internal Equality support group will be created to assist in the implementation of the Society's Equality policies.

The Equality action plan, the purpose of which is to ensure that the policy is delivered, will be reviewed regularly by the Chief Executive and the OEL.

Statistical and, if appropriate qualitative, data will be collected and collated annually by the OEL and presented to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will present the data to the Board, which will then cause it to be published internally and externally.

Human Resources Department responsibilities:

The HR Department is responsible for:

- the implementation of, and compliance with, the policy by all parts of the Society;
- the training and education of Line Managers so to enable them to apply the principles of this policy;
- including this policy in the induction programme for all staff, ensuring that it has been read and understood by the individual receiving the induction;
- reviewing draft job descriptions and person specifications to ensure they do not discriminate against any group or groups;
- updating this and associated policies when appropriate, ensuring that relevant consultation takes place as part of this process;
- monitoring and reporting on the composition of the workforce and applicants at all stages of the application process and taking appropriate actions (including positive action) to ensure the effectiveness of this policy; and
- developing relationships with external organisations for advice, resources, monitoring and benchmarking.

Employees' responsibilities:

Each individual employee is responsible for:

- showing respect for customers, colleagues and visitors to the Society, regardless of their background or characteristics;
- helping the Society meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unfair or unlawful discrimination;
- refraining from engaging in acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or members of the Society;

Line Managers' responsibilities:

In addition to their responsibilities as individual employees, Line Managers are expected to lead by example. They have additional responsibility for:

- ensuring compliance with this policy on the part of their staff;

- acting quickly in response to any complaints concerning discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation; and
- ensuring that consultants and advisers used by BHS demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of Equality and to abide by this policy, which will be referenced in appropriate service level agreements and/or contracts.

Policy on Recruitment, Selection and Promotion

The Society will take all reasonable steps to recruit, employ and promote employees on the basis of ability, skill and qualification, without regard to any of the grounds referred to above. All employees will be given equal opportunities and, where appropriate, special training to progress within the Society.

Recruitment Advertising

It is the general policy of this Society that vacancies shall be advertised both internally and externally, unless a position has been identified as a development opportunity, to give equal access to all sections of the community seeking employment.

Personal recommendations from existing employees as a primary or sole method of attracting applicants will not be permitted.

All advertisements will state that the Society has a positive equal opportunities policy and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.

Initial Recruitment Selection

Selection for a shortlist will be based on the information contained in the CV or application form. The Person Specification will contain the criteria which will be applied consistently to all applicants.

All disabled applicants meeting the criteria for initial selection will be interviewed, irrespective of any requirements to adapt facilities or buildings should they be successful.

Reasons for rejecting a candidate or not selecting for a short list are recorded for the purpose of recruitment monitoring.

Recruitment Selection

Staff responsible for interviews and selection will receive training in interviewing, including issues relating to equal opportunities. Interviews will be held in accessible locations and at reasonable times. They will contain only such tests as are relevant to the job.

All CVs and application forms will be kept for 12 months after the end of the recruitment process.

Where there is doubt about a disabled candidate's suitability for employment because of the nature of the disability, further advice will be sought as to the nature of the disability and the availability of aids to employment and/or grants for adaptation to buildings, if relevant, before a decision is taken.

Training and Promotion

The Society recognises that training and development are essential to maximise the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of its workforce. It will ensure that training needs within the Society are properly determined and appropriately met. All employees will have equal access to training and promotion opportunities provided by the Society and will be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities which become available.

Positive action training initiatives will be devised, where required, for targeted groups so that they are able to compete on an equal basis for vacancies and for promotion within the Society.