

MANDATORY POLICY

mp-HR-01

Subject:

Equal Opportunity

Summary

- This policy applies to **all Wates employees**
- This policy **sets out Wates' commitment to equality of opportunity** for all of its employees. It details the measures that the company, its managers and employees must take in pursuit of this goal along with senior management accountabilities and a review process

Revision:	2
Purpose of Revision to Policy:	Annual review
Date:	1 st September 2006
Written & Proposed By:	Steve Deans / Peter Burbidge
Consultation:	ExCo and Equality and Diversity Committee
Approved by Policy Panel:	3 rd October 2006
Authorised by 2nr Exco Directors:	Paul Drechsler and Julia Tyson
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Section A: Background & Objectives of the Policy

1. The Wates Group is committed to providing equal opportunities in recruitment, remuneration, training and promotion of employees and to eliminating discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, age, religion or belief, national or ethnic origin.
2. Wates will strive to ensure that entry into our organisation and progression within it is determined solely by the application of objective criteria and individual merit. We will treat equally employees and applicants for employment. Furthermore, no employee or applicant will be disadvantaged by requirements or conditions relating to disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, age, religion, belief, national or ethnic origin, or similar, which cannot be shown to be necessary and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate objective.
3. We want to attract and retain suitably qualified individuals or those who are able to develop sufficiently to undertake assignments within the Group by virtue of job-related standards of education, training, experience or personal qualifications. We will reward people using market rates for our industry and ensure that we apply these fairly and consistently to all our people.
4. The Group is equally committed to ensuring that we do not overlook or tolerate harassment or victimisation at work. Breaches of Wates' Harassment and Bullying Policy will be treated seriously and may be considered as gross misconduct under our disciplinary procedures.
5. The policy promotes the differences between people as strengths. People's attitudes and prejudices towards differences are the root causes of discrimination, which leads to unfair treatment.

Section B: Policy Details

1. Statement of Intent

Wates will not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind. In fulfilment of this aim, Wates will:

- Set clear and measurable objectives as part of its equality and diversity strategy;
- Provide training and guidance for staff with managerial responsibility for staff and/or employees to monitor the application of the policy;
- Regularly review procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, assessment, promotion, redundancy selection and training;
- Have policies and procedures in place to deal with any complaints or grievances about discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying;
- Ensure the company's salary and benefit ranges and salary review process are applied fairly and consistently;
- Actively encourage more people from under-represented groups to apply to the company through positive recruitment methods such as school/college visits and targeted advertising.

2. Objectives

As part of our programme to deliver equal opportunity, we aim to:

2.1. Gender and Race

Ensure that the balance of gender and ethnic origin among our staff better represents the community we serve.

2.2. Family

Have in place an extensive range of family-friendly policies and regularly review these to ensure we comply with current legislation and offer as much support as possible to employees with families.

2.3. Disability

Eliminate discrimination against disabled people in the field of employment, including recruitment, training, promotion, redundancy selection and retention, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its related Code of Practice. Wherever possible we will strive to improve the support, facilities and access to all relevant sites to employees with disabilities.

2.4. Religion or belief

Consider the effect of company policies and procedures, training programmes and company events, on employees from different religions or beliefs, including consideration of religious holidays, time for prayer, activities that may cause offence and dietary requirements.

2.5. Age

Regularly review all employment-related policies and procedures, terms and conditions of employment, training and development and benefits to ensure that they do not discriminate against any employee on the basis of age.

2.6. Respect for People

Uphold our core value of Respect for People to ensure we have an inclusive culture in which there is no oppressive behaviour including harassment or victimisation of any kind.

3. Training and Communication

Wates will provide support, advice and training that:

- Increases awareness of the prevalence and harm of discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of race and gender, and of the needs and abilities of people with disabilities or other disadvantages;
- Examines the nature of discrimination, both direct and indirect, and the ways in which it can occur and be prevented;
- Provides information and advice on the implications of the relevant legislation, in particular the Employment Codes of Practice produced by the Commission on Racial Equality and the Employment Opportunities Commission and any of the Codes of Practice arising from relevant legislation;
- Helps staff to behave in ways that are non-discriminatory by;
 - i. explaining the operation of and access to grievance and disciplinary procedures;
 - ii. examining the benefits to Wates of a workforce that reflects the diversity of society;
 - iii. identifying how to deal with discriminatory behaviour and processes, including the employer's duty to consider any reasonable adjustments to assist disabled applicants and employees, and the assistance available to help people with disabilities and other disadvantages;
 - iv. improving awareness of help available.

4. Monitoring

Wates will regularly monitor the following in its workforce:

- Men and women:
- Part time employees
- Age profile of work force
- Ethnic origin
- Disabled employees

We ask all new employees to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form. We will use these forms to monitor the composition of our workforce and to help us assess our performance against our equality and diversity strategy. Any information will be securely held by the HR team and no information relating to an employee will be released to anybody without the explicit signed consent of the employee concerned.

Wates will also monitor the application of its pay and reward strategy to ensure principles of equal pay are upheld.

Wates will use staff surveys to assess the success of its Equal Opportunities Policy

5. Recruitment, Selection, Assessment and Promotion

In furtherance of this Equal Opportunities Policy, Wates best practice will be to:

- Use job profiles as the basis of all recruitment activity;
- Ensure that criteria for recruitment are job-related and demonstrate a direct link to the job profile;
- Expose vacancies to as wide a pool of potential applicants as practical, by considering the wording of advertisements and where these are published or publicised;
- Examine tools and processes such as application forms (what they contain; how, when and to whom they are issued), and the short listing process;
- Train staff involved in recruitment and promotion to reduce the risk of discriminatory attitudes affecting decisions, and to ensure that they are conversant with the necessary legislation;
- Ensure that all employees have the opportunity to develop themselves and to progress within the organisation, through our Performance Review & Development Planning procedures;
- Ensure that we have succession planning in place to identify those employees who are ready for promotion.

Further guidance on equal opportunities in recruitment is available in the Recruitment Policy and Procedure on the company Intranet.

6. Equality and Diversity Strategy

Wates Group has an "Opportunity for All" Committee whose purpose is to create an inclusive and supportive culture where all our people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and achieve outstanding performance.

The Wates "Opportunity for All" strategy is agreed by the Executive Committee and championed by the Executive Chairman. It is supported by an Equality and Diversity Group comprising senior managers who:

- provide governance and direction for Group equality and diversity strategies and plans;
- evaluate Group progress against equality and diversity objectives and
- provide sponsorship and guidance on how to ensure objectives are met.

7. Review

The Human Resources Director and the HR team will annually review the working of this policy. If changes in legislation may impact this policy, then an immediate review will take place.

Section C: Accountabilities and Compliance

All Wates employees must comply fully with this policy. The HR team and the "Opportunities for All" Committee will monitor implementation of this policy and compliance.

Section D: Expected Costs to Comply

1. Minimal – legal obligation.

Section E: Further Information & Queries

1. Grievance Procedure

This should be used for resolving any issue where an employee feels they have been unfairly treated.

2. Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

This procedure is for employees in cases of serious bullying or harassment; it provides guidance on definitions and examples of bullying and harassment.

3. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

For any employees who believe they have witnessed a serious breach of our Equal Opportunities Policy, this procedure offers a confidential phone line for reporting their concerns. Employees making a disclosure of this kind are assured of their protection from any form of victimisation as a result of coming forward. In order for action to be taken against a perpetrator of harassment, it is always helpful for the complainant to identify themselves when they make their complaint. However, if an employee has real concerns about repercussions, then information can be given anonymously.

4. Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

This procedure will be followed where an investigation into a complaint identifies that an employee has subjected another employee to any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation.

5. Contact the HR team if you have any questions about this policy or any other aspect of your equal opportunity rights.

Section F: Appendices

None