

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### About Bisley

The Bisley Office Furniture Group conducts its business from its manufacturing site at Newport in South Wales, Bagshot in Surrey and the showrooms located in Dallington Street, London and the Calico Building, Manchester. Bisley is a UK manufacturer of a wide range of steel storage products predominantly for the business workplace, with ranges designed for those working from home for both the UK and international markets. Bisley also manufactures industrial storage products designed for use in heavy engineering environments for both commercial and private sectors.

### Scope of the Policy

It is this organisation's policy to treat all job applicants, employees and other workers fairly and equally, regardless of their sex, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national origins, ethnic origin or disability.

Through this policy and procedure and the training and development of managers and staff, the organisation will do all it can to promote good practice in this area in order to reduce the likelihood of discrimination or harassment occurring. The organisation is an equal opportunity employer.

Equal opportunity is about good employment practices and efficient use of our most valuable asset, our people. Every manager and employee has personal responsibility for the implementation of the policy, or other questions, should be addressed to the HR department, as should any requests for special training.

The organisation will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment of an employee or other worker on the grounds of sex, transgender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national origins, ethnic origin or disability. Discrimination is prejudice, leading to unfair treatment of an individual.

### Harassment

What is harassment? Harassment means verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct which:

- Is of a sexual nature or on the grounds of sex, transgender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national origins, ethnic origin, disability or other personal characteristic; and
- Is unwanted; and
- Has the purpose or effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Harassment also means less favourable treatment of a person because he or she has rejected or submitted to the type of conduct described above.

Harassment can take many forms. Examples of harassment prohibited by this policy include:

- Verbal abuse or offensive jokes or pranks related to a person's sex, race, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, etc; lewd or suggestive comments; requests for sexual favours or repeated requests for dates;
- Unnecessary body contact; threatened or actual assault or violence;
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations or work activities on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation etc;
- Display of 'pin-ups', pornography, inflammatory or abusive literature or graffiti;
- Using e-mail or the Internet for the purpose of bullying or making abusive or offensive remarks related to a person's characteristics such as their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, etc or to send pornography or inflammatory literature.

This is not an exhaustive list. Some forms of harassment plainly constitute gross misconduct for the purposes of the Company's disciplinary procedure and will normally merit summary dismissal. Examples of this category would be:

- Threatened or actual sexual or racial assaults; and
- Suggestions or threats by managers or supervisors that sexual favours or racial origins could affect some one's job security or prospects.

Other forms of harassment may constitute gross misconduct depending on the circumstances of the case.

Employees should be aware that, as well as committing a disciplinary offence, an individual found by an employment tribunal to have harassed a fellow employee on the grounds of sex, race, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief or age in the course of their employment may be personally liable to compensate the victim. In addition, harassment for whatever reason may constitute a crime punishable by up to six months imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000.

## Bullying

Bullying means any unsolicited or unwelcome act that humiliates, intimidates or undermines the individual involved. No form of bullying will be condoned by The Company either at work or outside work, if it has a bearing on the work relationship.

Examples of bullying behaviour include, but are not limited to, derogatory remarks, insensitive jokes or pranks, insulting or aggressive behaviour, ignoring or excluding an individual, setting unrealistic deadlines, public criticism, substituting responsible tasks with menial or trivial ones, withholding necessary information and constantly undervaluing effort. These actions must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the particular individual. It is the perceptions of the recipient that determine whether any action or statement can be viewed as bullying.

## The Policy

The policy applies to the process of recruitment and selection, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay and benefits and to every other aspect of employment, including general treatment at work and the processes involved in the termination of employment.

Where increased pay and/or enhanced benefits are offered to employees on the basis of length of service, these are intended to reward loyalty, maintain motivation and reflect higher levels of relevant experience.

The policy applies to job applicants (both internal and external) and all employees and other workers whether full time, part time, casual, temporary, seasonal or contract. The policy also applies equally to the treatment of the organisation's customers/clients and suppliers.

Employees should note that the imposition of any provision, criterion or practice which has a disproportionate adverse impact on someone on the grounds of his or her sex, race, marital status, civil partnership status,

religion or belief, sexual orientation or age will be unlawful unless it can be justified on grounds of business need.

When establishing criteria for recruitment and promotion into vacant posts, the company will consider carefully whether any minimum or maximum number of years of relevant experience is necessary for effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job-based reason why they are necessary. The company operates a retirement age of 65 for all employees. Employees have the right, however, to submit a written request to continue working beyond this age and all such requests will be treated open-mindedly and fairly.

Employees or other workers who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the organisation about their disability. Management will then arrange to discuss with that person what “reasonable adjustments” to their job or working conditions or environment might assist them in the performance of their duties. The person will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that they believe would be helpful to them. Careful consideration will be given to any proposal and, where reasonable such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee or other worker.

This policy will be monitored on a regular basis by the senior management. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely with a view to identifying measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy.

## The Procedure

Any complaint of harassment or bullying will be handled by the Company sensitively, in a timely and confidential manner. This is a specific procedure to deal with harassment or bullying complaints. Any such complaint should be raised under this procedure and not under the Company’s Grievance Procedure.

The Company recognises the right of employees to determine for themselves whether the words or behaviour of others is acceptable to them and to bring a complaint in respect of harassment or bullying. Following the investigation of a complaint, the decision as to whether the complaint is warranted and, if so, what disciplinary sanction should apply is the responsibility of management.

Any records made of any action taken under this procedure will be treated as confidential wherever possible. This procedure only applies whilst the Company employs you. If you consider yourself to be the victim of harassment or bullying, you may in some cases be able to resolve the matter satisfactorily by explaining clearly to the perpetrator that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the Company’s policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask a fellow employee to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator.

You are encouraged to seek the assistance of the HR Department when you want advice regarding appropriate steps to stop the harassment or bullying. Any such discussion will be strictly confidential.

If it is considered to be appropriate, the line manager or HR department may seek to resolve the matter informally by indicating to the alleged perpetrator, without prejudging the matter, that there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow employee; that any such behaviour is contrary to Company policy; that the continuation of such behaviour would, if substantiated, amount to a serious disciplinary offence and that their discussion is informal and confidential.

If a complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator will not be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances and following consultation with you, the Company may decide that it is necessary to investigate further and take more formal action.

In the event that informal resolution of the matter is unsuccessful or considered inappropriate in the circumstances, you may make a formal written complaint about the harassment or bullying to your line manager (or next level of management or line manager of the alleged perpetrator / or the HR department). In addition, the Company may decide that it is necessary to take more formal action. A formal complaint may lead ultimately to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions on the perpetrator.

You must provide the following details: the name of the alleged perpetrator(s), the nature of the harassment or bullying, the dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

Where you and the alleged perpetrator work in proximity to each other, it may be necessary to ensure you do not continue to do so whilst the complaint is being investigated and during any consequent disciplinary proceedings. This may necessitate that one or both parties be suspended on full pay.

Your complaint will be investigated promptly, impartially and, so far as practicable, confidentially. Following your complaint and normally within five working days, a meeting will be held with you to consider your allegation and the findings of the investigation and to enable you to put your case. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official that may address the meeting on your behalf but may not answer questions for you.

After the meeting (and normally within five working days), the Company will write to you to inform you of its decision and to notify you of your right to appeal to a more senior manager if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. The appeal should be submitted within three working days.

If you submit an appeal, you will be invited to attend a meeting (normally within five working days of receipt of the appeal) to consider the matter.

Where the evidence gathered in the investigation and during the meeting indicates to the Company that a disciplinary offence has been committed, the Company's disciplinary procedure will be instigated and a disciplinary hearing under that procedure will be arranged to deal with the alleged disciplinary offence. In accordance with that procedure, the alleged perpetrator will be provided with relevant evidence about the allegations against him or her and will be given a full opportunity to respond.

Where the investigation indicates that no disciplinary offence has been committed, both you and the alleged perpetrator will be informed in writing.

*R Costin*

Signed .....

Richard Costin  
Chief Executive

Date 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024