



CHANGES TO STAFFING – WINTER 2018/19

For this winter season we have had to make a small change to the way in which we operate and the service that we provide. This document will hopefully clarify these changes but please ask if you require any additional information. You can also email Andy on info@hostsavoie.co.uk

The Background

In June of this year the EU voted to tighten up the Posted Workers Directive – the rule that allows companies such as ourselves to second employees to another EU state whilst remaining under the social security arrangements of their home country. Countries were given until 2020 to adopt the new rules but France has opted to do so with immediate effect.

What are the new rules?

Despite the UK having opted out of the Working Time Directive we now have to respect the conditions of it when seconding staff to a country that did sign up (as was the case with France). This means that staff must be given the equivalent of two days off per week. The value of certain benefits (such as accommodation) cannot be considered in minimum wage calculations either, all of which leads to a huge increase in staffing costs for chalet operators employing seasonal staff from the UK.

How has the chalet industry responded?

There are fewer beds available as most companies have trimmed their portfolios in order to try and maximise occupancy rates. Prices have also gone up as a result of the change in what is a basic supply and demand calculation. You may also have noticed that many of the large tour operators have moved to a 5 day catering system with 2 chalet days off each week, and we've heard of others converting chalets to self-catering or only catering the evenings.

There is a delicate balance in our minds between not compromising on service but also keeping prices down. A second chalet day off is a big financial commitment for many people, especially when paying restaurant prices for a whole family.

What has changed at Host Savoie?

Like all other operators we have been forced to hire staff to work fewer hours for more money! In order to achieve the extra time off and reduced hours that are required under these new laws we have revamped our breakfast service so as to ensure that it can be carried out by one person at a time rather than two. Winter staff will each have two extra mornings off compared to previous years, and rather than cooking hot food to order the one staff member on duty will need to focus on table service and replenishing the buffet breakfast when required. They will however be serving up a new daily breakfast special that will have been prepared in advance. The new breakfast specials menu was devised by Chef Danny this autumn and we hope that whilst it has come about through necessity it will offer a greater diversity to our breakfasts.

Why can't we just hire more staff to cover the extra breakfast shifts?

Additional staff on secondment need a wage but they also need accommodation. The cost of seasonal apartments is horrendous in Morzine and in order to employ and accommodate extra staff we would need to increase our holiday prices significantly. We have always sought to offer value for money and therefore made a calculated decision to alter our service rather than our prices. The only alternative would have been to contact you in the autumn and request an additional payment or offer a cancellation of your holiday, and this is not something that we wished to do when you already had flights booked and such like.

Is this all linked to Brexit?

Actually, no it isn't! Whilst we are still a member of the EU we need to operate under its laws and after March the goalposts will likely shift once again. Whether we will be able to second workers at all in future is still very much up in the air. For the moment the biggest impact of Brexit is that it has weakened the pound against the euro and caused an increase in our overheads even before all of these new working time regulations are taken into consideration.

By making these changes we are just about managing to keep our prices the same and still cater 6 mornings and 6 evenings per week, whilst operating on very fine margins. We thank you for your understanding and hope that you enjoy our tasty new breakfast specials!

Andy & Sylvie