

Pets

Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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1.1 Our approach

Pets just see people. They aren't biased and they don't discriminate. We take our inspiration from pets, and we value and respect difference in all its forms. We understand how important diversity and inclusion is to continued innovation and business success. Our aim is to reflect the diversity of the communities we operate in, which is reflected in our Sustainability Strategy and goals.

We want to create an inclusive experience for our colleagues, consumers, and clients in which:

- everyone is welcome and feels part of our business;
- our colleagues feel supported to make their best contribution to our business;
- we encourage and support inclusive pet ownership.

In this policy we explain our behaviour commitments as an organisation and our commitment to protecting our colleagues, including what we expect from individuals. The aim of this policy is to enable everyone to understand our approach to diversity and inclusion, including our responsibilities as an employer, and what we expect from individuals.

We are responsible for creating a working environment that is free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. Individuals, as well as us as an employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the course of employment, against colleagues, consumers, suppliers and the public and you should make sure that you understand what we expect and require.

In addition, we expect you to support our commitments to diversity and inclusion including recognising and valuing individual differences and treating everyone with dignity and respect.

This policy applies to all colleagues (which may, for the purposes of this policy, include temporary or permanent colleagues, agency workers, locums, contractors, or others working in the business). Line Managers are also required to ensure that the principles set out in this policy are upheld.

1.2 What do we mean by inclusion?

An inclusive environment is one in which all our colleagues and consumers feel welcome and respected, and which helps us all to take pride in what we do.

1.3 What is diversity?

Diversity is about recognising and celebrating the individual differences of everyone who works with us, shops with us, or visits our practices or groom rooms, including their different characteristics, backgrounds, and perspectives.

1.4 Our Commitments

- To recognise characteristics that truly reflect diverse representation including different backgrounds, interests, appearances, personalities and working styles, as well as sex, gender and gender reassignment, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status, and religious beliefs.
- Promote a culture of kindness, trust and respect in which we are all united by our shared values and behaviours.
- Provide an inclusive experience for our customers and clients now and those we look to welcome in the future, recognising and respecting different needs, expectations and influences.
- We'll help provide an inclusive environment and resources, where possible, to make our physical and digital spaces accessible.
- Inspire and engage our colleagues, customers and clients through inclusive internal and external facing communications that reflect diversity.
- Help shape best practice on diversity and inclusion by collaborating with other retailers and vet professionals to exchange knowledge and experience.
- Partner with external organisations that support our nationally recognised commitments.

Our Executive Committee sponsor our diversity and inclusion strategy and drive diversity and inclusion through their teams. We are committed to listening to and involving our colleagues in our progress towards greater diversity and inclusion and all our colleagues contribute to our inclusion community.

Our Commitments to our existing and future colleagues

- We value all colleagues and candidates for their unique talents, perspectives, and contribution.
- We aim to break down barriers to create equitable opportunities for candidates and colleagues to join and participate in our business.
- We will create opportunities to attract candidates from underrepresented groups so that we reflect the diversity of the communities we operate in.
- We commit to providing colleagues with opportunities for ongoing personal development and education around Diversity and Inclusion topics.
- We won't tolerate unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form. We'll take allegations seriously, investigate and may take disciplinary action. Wherever appropriate, our focus is on education and remedial action in the first instance.
- We'll make reasonable adjustments to support colleagues with a disability to carry out their role.
- We'll work with colleagues with caring responsibilities to try and find working patterns and arrangements that help them to carry out their role.
- We'll do our best to protect colleagues and candidates from any negative treatment related to differences broader than legally protected characteristics.
- We'll work towards engaging with suppliers who support us by having a diverse and inclusive culture.

Our Commitments to Equal and Equitable Opportunities

Our aim is to reflect the diversity of the communities we operate in. We are committed to recognising characteristics that truly reflect diverse representation, including different backgrounds, interests, appearances, personalities and working styles. We aim to ensure that no colleague, potential colleague, consumer, contractor or visitor receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of: sex; race, nationality or ethnicity; religion or belief; age; disability; sexual orientation; gender identity, transition or gender change; pregnancy or maternity; and marital or civil partnership status.

We are an equal opportunities employer. We aim to provide opportunities in employment and pre-employment to all colleagues and potential colleagues and we will not discriminate unlawfully against our job applicants or colleagues in any of our activities or operations on the basis of any of the above stated protected characteristics. In addition, our policy statement also applies to the following protected characteristic within Northern Ireland: political opinion.

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

We consider all forms of discrimination to be unacceptable and we will not tolerate acts which breach this policy. All instances of such behaviour, or alleged behaviour, will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to our disciplinary procedures.

We are committed to supporting individuals who have a disability or long-term condition to overcome the barriers that they may face in our recruitment processes and throughout their employment with us. We will make reasonable adjustments to support colleagues with a disability or long-term condition to carry out their role.

Where appropriate, we will take lawful affirmative and positive action to encourage participation from groups that are under-represented in our workforce.

We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all of our colleagues, contractors, volunteers, suppliers, and consumers. We will monitor the composition of the workforce to help us achieve our aim of reflecting the diversity of the communities we operate in, creating an inclusive culture that supports diversity and to promote good employment practices to prevent discrimination as far as reasonably possible.

We ensure that all incidents of alleged discrimination, harassment and bullying are monitored and we will review the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis. Where such monitoring or review identifies any areas for improvement, we will develop an action plan to address the issue.

Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998

We are registered with the Equality Commission for the purposes of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998. As such we are obliged to monitor the community background and sex of our job applicants and workforce. We are also obliged to review the composition of our workforce and our employment policies and practices every three years and, where appropriate, to consider taking affirmative action to promote fair participation between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. We are committed to complying with these duties and have set up suitable arrangements to ensure that we do so.

1.5 Our Expectations

If you are a colleague, contractor, temporary or agency worker or otherwise work in the business, we ask that you:

- Where applicable, complete our diversity and inclusion training and familiarise yourself with our values and the behaviours we expect;
- Recognise that your individual actions will impact on others and that you have a responsibility to help us create a diverse and inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and valued;
- Try to understand other peoples’ points of view and help them understand yours;
- Be aware of different cultures and customs and respect the benefits that diversity can bring;
- Are honest and speak-up respectfully if you see or hear exclusion, or any instances of potential discrimination.

1.6 Further Information & Support

There is more information about different types of unlawful discrimination as well as some examples, in the attached information sheet/appendix.

- Bullying & Harassment policy
- Transitioning at Work policy
- IDGA (‘Investigation, Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeal’) policy
- Retail Trust – contact them on 0808 801 0808 or go to their website:
<https://www.retailtrust.org.uk>

If you have any questions about this policy, or if you need support, please refer to your Line Manager or the People Services Team.

This policy is owned by our People Team and reviewed by our Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Forum which meets bi-monthly to review our diversity and inclusion actions and progress. The policy is approved by our ESG Committee, which operates with delegated authority of our Board, and receives regular updates on performance against our targets. This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to promote our ambition to become the most responsible pet care business in the world.

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Appendix – Definitions

Additional information on understanding and preventing discrimination

Defining Discrimination

Simply put, discrimination happens when someone is treated differently from others based on a personal characteristic. There are different types of discrimination, and although our aim is to recognise and respect characteristics that truly represent diverse representation, there are nine different characteristics protected in law. These characteristics are;

- Sex,
- Gender reassignment,
- Sexuality
- Race/ethnicity
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age,
- Disability,
- Marital status,
- Religious beliefs

Direct Discrimination:

Direct discrimination happens when someone is treated less well than another person because of a protected characteristic.

An example of direct discrimination: Molly who is a store manager offers a job to Sarah rather than Ian. While they are both suitable, the team is currently all women and Molly feels Ian won't fit in.

Discrimination by perception:

Discrimination by perception can happen when a person is treated less favourably because the person is perceived to have a protected characteristic, even though they don't.

An example of discrimination by perception: George does not want Ian to work with suppliers because he looks really young, and the suppliers might think he is not very experienced. Ian is actually the same age as George, so George is discriminating against him because he doesn't look older.

Discrimination by association:

Discrimination by association can happen when a person is treated less favourably because they are linked to or associated with a protected characteristic.

An example of discrimination by association: Lee, a store manager, does not offer overtime to Karen because she has a disabled son at home and he thinks it would be too much for her. While Lee thought he was doing the right thing by not offering the overtime to Karen, Lee is actually treating Karen differently as a result of her caring responsibilities.

Indirect discrimination:

This can be harder to spot. Indirect discrimination can happen when an organisation puts a practice or a policy in place which applies equally to everyone but has a worse effect on people with a particular protected characteristic.

An example of indirect discrimination: Palo is choosing a team to improve the wellbeing of distribution centre colleagues. He only chooses colleagues whose first language is English as he thinks they will be the best communicators. As more colleagues with English as a first language are likely to be British nationals, Palo is indirectly discriminating against choosing colleagues of other nationalities to be part of the project team.

Harassment:

Harassment is any unwanted conduct or behaviour, related to one of the nine protected characteristics, that violates dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This means that a colleague can experience harassment even if the behaviour complained of is not directed towards them.

Further information and detailed examples of bullying and harassment are set out in our Bullying and Harassment policy.

Examples of harassment:

Karen and Julia make fun of Mohammed because he is fasting during Ramadan. They say Mohammed is on a 'see food' diet. Seeing it but not eating it. Mohammed feels this violates his dignity.

Leena, a store colleague overhears Nancy and Levi agreeing that they are pleased that none of the store team are trans as they think this would be awkward for everyone. This exchange creates a hostile environment and Leena feels harassed.

Victimisation:

Victimisation is when someone is treated unfairly because they are taking, being perceived or supporting someone to take action under the Equality Act e.g. making a complaint of discrimination.

An example of victimisation: Mohammed has made a complaint about Karen and Julia's behaviour. Ian, the JVP, gives Mohammed more weekend shifts because the complaint reflected poorly on the practice and on Ian.

Positive Action and Positive Discrimination

Treating someone more favourably because of one of the nine protected characteristics is unlawful, however well-intentioned. This is called positive discrimination.

Positive Action is an exception to this and is allowed; it is where action can be taken to support under-represented groups in our business. Positive Action includes things like providing training to help those in underrepresented groups to develop towards more senior roles or to advertise in certain places to encourage applications from a more diverse group of people.