



## **Diversity and Equality Policy**

Retail Trust welcomes diversity in its residents, Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers and those who use our services.

This policy applies to Board Trustees, residents, staff, volunteers and those who use our services. It also covers actions in employment, day to day dealings with colleagues and contractors, suppliers and consultants providing a service to the organisation.

Retail Trust is committed to ensuring that Board Trustees, residents, staff, volunteers and those who use our services are not discriminated against, and do not themselves discriminate, on the grounds of their religion, race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family composition, economic status, disability, mental health, HIV status and political and Trade Union affiliation. The charity is taking active steps to address and eliminate unfair or unlawful discrimination or prejudice where these are identified in the charity's procedures or practices. Retail Trust monitors its services and procedures regularly and carefully to ensure all individuals get fair and equal treatment.

Further information about our commitment to diversity and equality is available from the Head of H R.

### **1. HARASSMENT**

- Retail Trust will not tolerate harassment and allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with confidentially. Any allegation made maliciously in relation to staff or residents and service users will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Harassment may take place for many reasons some examples of which are listed below :
  - Unwelcome remarks, gestures, innuendos or suggestions
  - Offensive or suggestive literature or images
  - Bullying
  - Unwelcome physical contact
- Harassment can occur on the grounds of :
  - Race
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender re-assignment
  - Religious or political beliefs
  - An individual attempting to challenge alleged harassment
  - Membership or non-membership of a trade union
  - Physical, mental or learning disabilities

- Ex-offender status
  - Age
  - Actual or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS
- Retail Trust recognises that harassment can have a devastating effect on an individual and cause great anxiety. It can result in absence from work or loss of concentration and can have a damaging effect on the working environment and residents' lives.
  - If a member of staff or resident or service user, feels that they are experiencing any type of discriminating behaviour or are being harassed, they should explain to the person that their behaviour is unacceptable and ask them to stop acting in this way.
  - If the problem persists, or the person feels that they cannot approach the person concerned, the immediate Manager should be advised and asked to investigate the matter. If it is not appropriate to advise the immediate Manager, a more senior Manager or whoever the person feels most at ease with. If the person is unwilling to speak to any of these people, a senior Manager in the H R office should be contacted or alternatively, the whistle-blowing policy may be invoked.
  - The person asked to help should try to resolve the problem, which could lead to disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator. This action could include dismissal. Where possible, the details of the allegation will be kept confidential.

## **2. STAFF**

1. The charity is working towards being an equal opportunities employer and aims to ensure that the composition of its staff reflects that of the local area of each estate. Where appropriate, Retail Trust will take action to address under-representation.
2. The charity is working to create equal access to opportunities for paid employment and voluntary involvement while continuing to base selection and promotion decisions solely on the ability to meet the requirements of the post.
3. Recruitment for all posts will be carried out in a manner which accords with prevailing equal opportunities legislation and good practice and in accordance with Retail Trust's recruitment policy as agreed by the Diversity & Equality Group
4. All staff taking part in recruitment and selection processes will have undertaken training in recruitment practices and procedures and this training should be updated at least every three years.
5. Job sharing opportunities will be offered where possible.
6. All non-job related criteria will be disregarded during either the recruitment process or while in employment. Appointments, Personal Development

Reviews (PDRs) and promotion will be made and or given solely on the basis of merit and ability.

7. Staff will receive training to develop awareness and understanding of diversity and equality issues.

### **3. RESIDENTS & SERVICE USERS**

1. The charity is committed to the fair treatment of all residents and service users. It aims to ensure that all decisions on assistance and advice including the marketing, assessment and allocations processes and procedures are objective, free from bias and are made solely on the basis of need. The charity will carry out independent audits of such processes on a periodic basis as agreed by the Diversity & Equality Group.
2. If a resident believes that he or she has been discriminated against by a member of staff, a complaint using the Complaints Procedure should be made.
3. Retail Trust aims to comply with the provisions contained in "Tackling Racial Harassment : A Code of Practice for Social Landlords". A copy of the Code may be obtained from the Managing Director.
4. In addition to aiming to comply with the Code in tackling and addressing racial harassment, Retail Trust commits to preventing and/or addressing other forms of harassment which may be suffered by residents.

### **4. CONTRACTORS, SUPPLIERS & CONSULTANTS**

1. Contractors, suppliers and consultants will be asked to confirm their compliance with this policy and not to engage or allow individuals provided by them on an agency or contract basis, to contravene this policy. If so, Retail Trust reserves the right to cancel the agreement with the contractor, supplier or consultant.

### **5. ACTION**

1. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy, assisted by the Managing Director and the Head of H R
2. A Diversity and Equality Group has been set up to agree, implement and regularly review an action plan.
3. The Board of Trustees annually reviews progress against the agreed action plan.
4. Retail Trust is currently endeavouring to understand the nature of discrimination and its roots and how it affects people and will continue to build this understanding into our work. Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken in terms of staff or action via the Complaints Procedure in terms of residents or those using our services.

The Diversity & Equality Group (or an independent auditor) will carry out periodic reviews of the effectiveness of this policy as agreed.

*All Retail Trust's policies are subject to periodic review  
and may be amended*

| **August 2007 - reviewed August 2008**  
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