Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Fresh Connection Ltd (company no. 05805560), trading as The Vaults & Garden, No. 2 King Edward Street, Oxford OX1 4HS

Approved by: William Pouget, Managing Director

Last reviewed: June 2026. Next review: June 2027.

1. Purpose and commitment

We want The Vaults & Garden to be a place where everyone is treated fairly and with respect, and where people from all backgrounds feel welcome, whether they work with us or eat with us.

We will not accept unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. This policy explains what that means and how we put it into practice. It supports our Prevention of Harassment (including Sexual Harassment) Policy, our Human and Labour Rights Policy and our Health and Safety Policy.

This policy is not part of any contract of employment. It never reduces anyone's legal rights.

2. Who this policy covers

This policy applies to:

- all staff, including full-time, part-time, temporary and casual staff;
- job applicants;
- agency workers, volunteers and contractors working for us;
- how we treat customers, clients and visitors.

It covers all our work: Vaults & Garden Café, MRB/Glasshouse (Manor Road Building), Salsas del Sol, Alpha Bar, our Stanley Road production kitchen, deliveries, and event catering at client venues, including the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and University of Oxford departments.

3. Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination because of nine "protected characteristics":

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin);
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

We go further than the law. We will not treat anyone unfairly for any reason that has nothing to do with their ability to do the job.

4. What discrimination means

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: applying a rule or practice to everyone that puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, when it cannot be justified.
- Harassment: unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic, or of a sexual nature, that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

- Victimisation: treating someone badly because they have made, or helped with, a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

For disabled people, the law also covers unfavourable treatment because of something arising from their disability, and failing to make reasonable adjustments.

5. Recruitment, selection, training and promotion

- Our recruitment is open and fair, without any discrimination. We choose people for jobs, training and promotion on their skills, experience and potential.
- Job adverts, interviews and selection decisions are based on what the job really needs.
- We ask job applicants if they need any adjustments to take part in the recruitment process.
- Everyone has fair access to training and development.

6. Pay and conditions

We pay people fairly for the work they do, whatever their protected characteristics. Men and women doing equal work are entitled to equal pay. Rotas, shifts, tasks and other conditions are given out fairly.

7. Reasonable adjustments

We make reasonable adjustments so that disabled staff and job applicants are not put at a disadvantage. Examples include changes to duties, hours, equipment or the way we communicate. We talk to the person about what they need.

We also make reasonable adjustments for disabled customers and visitors, so they can use our cafés, bars and events as easily as possible.

8. Religion and belief, flexible working and family life

- We respect staff's religion or belief. We will consider requests about prayer times, religious festivals, dress or dietary needs fairly, and agree to them where we reasonably can.
- All employees can ask for flexible working, such as changes to their hours, days or start and finish times, from their first day. We deal with every request in a reasonable manner, following the Acas Code of Practice, and only refuse for a good business reason.
- We support staff who are pregnant or on family leave, such as maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental or parental leave, in line with their legal rights.

9. Respectful behaviour

We expect everyone to treat colleagues, customers, clients and visitors with respect. Jokes, comments or "banter" about someone's protected characteristics are not acceptable. Our Prevention of Harassment (including Sexual Harassment) Policy explains the behaviour we expect and how we protect staff from harassment by customers and other third parties.

10. Dietary and cultural needs in our food service

Food is an important part of many people's faith and culture. Our menus have always aimed to meet a range of dietary needs, as well as to appeal to cultural diversity. We include halal, vegan, low-salt and low-spice options. We include many different cultural themes, with a rotating menu featuring Latin American, Caribbean, pan-Mediterranean, Scandinavian, Middle Eastern and Asian dishes. We treat questions about food with care and respect.

We cater for allergen needs, with clear allergen information for all customers. We give customers and event clients accurate information about the ingredients in our food, so they can choose for themselves. Our Health and Safety Policy explains how we manage allergens. We only describe food as halal, vegan or free from an allergen when we are sure that it is.

11. Raising concerns and complaints

If you think you have been treated unfairly, or you see it happen to someone else, please tell William Pouget, Managing Director, or Natacha Cirou, Operations Manager. If one of them is involved, go to the other one.

We will take every concern seriously, deal with it fairly and as confidentially as we can, and follow the Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. No one will be treated badly for raising a genuine concern.

Customers, clients and visitors can raise a concern with the manager on duty or with the Managing Director.

Acas offers free, confidential advice on work problems: helpline 0300 123 1100, www.acas.org.uk.

12. Who is responsible for what

- William Pouget, Managing Director, has overall responsibility for this policy.
- Natacha Cirou, Operations Manager, runs the policy day to day and makes sure staff are told about it at induction.
- Managers and supervisors make sure this policy is followed on every shift and pass on any concern straight away.
- All staff must follow this policy and treat everyone with respect.

13. Training and awareness

All staff are told about this policy at induction, including part-time, temporary, casual and agency staff. Managers and supervisors are trained on fair recruitment, reasonable adjustments and dealing with concerns.

14. Monitoring and review

We review this policy every year, or sooner if the law changes or a concern shows that we need to.

This policy was last reviewed in June 2026. The next review is due in June 2027.

Version control and approval

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Company	Fresh Connection Ltd (company no. 05805560), trading as The Vaults & Garden
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Next review	June 2027 (or sooner if the law changes)
Day-to-day policy owner	Natacha Cirou, Operations Manager