

Corporate citizenship

We aim to provide our customers with unmatched choice and value, our staff with a supportive workplace and to conduct our business with minimal impact on the environment.

Our people

Our customers reflect every background and community. So too should our employees. Our uncompromising commitment to equal opportunities gives us access to the broadest range of skills and experiences.

Our working practices encourage initiative, promote teamwork and build on the strengths and aptitudes of each employee. Our "Respect For People" programme fosters a supportive working environment free from harassment, bullying or discrimination. To date more than 25,000 UK employees have participated in "Respect For People" training courses.

In our 24/7 society flexibility is as vital to our employees as to our customers. To attract and retain the best people, the Group is receptive to flexible working arrangements wherever practical. Our career break schemes, together with

parental and dependants' leave policies support employees in achieving their particular work/life balance.

UK employees and their families have access to an independently managed employee assistance programme which provides free, confidential advice on financial, legal and personal matters.

Integrity at work

Integrity and trust are essential to our business success and to the well-being of our employees. Our "Blowing the whistle" policy encourages every employee to share responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of honesty throughout our business. Employees are guaranteed confidentiality and support if they report or prevent malpractice.

People management

We are committed to training and developing all our employees. Modular training for UK employees is linked to NVQ accreditation. Management development programmes have been created with Henley Management College. Personal development plans enable employees across the Group to explore opportunities and broaden their skills and experience.

Share bonus and incentive schemes encourage employees to contribute directly to the achievement of individual and collective success.

Our Disability Working Group monitors and manages progress in making our business more accessible to employees and customers.

To support our policy development in these areas we are working in partnership with the Disability Rights Commission and Commission for Racial Equality. In Northern Ireland we have worked closely with the Fair Employment Commission to develop unique selection and training packages to attract employees from across the community.



1. Our employees voted for the four charities they wanted to support during the year. 2. Simon Turner, MD, PC World, presents a cheque to Rumney junior school, who collected the most *Ink for I.T.* cartridges, at PC World, Cardiff. 3. Curry's, Coventry store manager, Richard Birk and the Canley fire brigade support "Switched on to Safety". The Curry's campaign was launched in April 2002 to highlight the dangers of electrical accidents in the home.

Health and safety management

UK and Ireland employees during the year (full time equivalent)

24,576

Table 1

Reports made under the Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

425

Of which:

Injuries (60 designated major)

424

Reportable disease

1

Dangerous occurrences

0

Reports per 1,000 employees

17

Table 2

Reported violence or threat of violence to employees (16 requiring hospital treatment)

4,186

Days lost in consequence:

Retail Operations

1,359

Mastercare

1,077

Days lost annually as a percentage of total employee days

0.044%

One fatality occurred when a pedestrian walked between parked cars into the path of a reversing vehicle.

Health and safety

Across Europe we operate more than 1,300 retail, service and distribution centres. Our businesses employ 33,557 people and we serve more than 64 million customers each year. Every aspect of our business must meet high standards of health and safety.

Chief Operating Officer, David Hamid, is responsible for health and safety compliance across our UK operations. A Health and Safety Committee directs policies and compliance. Risk assessments have been carried out throughout the UK and Ireland. None of our operations involve activities that are considered to be hazardous.

Where risks are identified, we seek to eliminate them or to reduce them to an acceptable level. For example employees exposed to the risk of injury through incorrect manual handling are provided with training and equipment to reduce the chance of injury. Likewise stores and other workplaces are designed to avoid the risks of tripping or falling. Key performance indicators measure accident reduction and site safety inspections. (See tables 1 and 2.)

There were no prosecutions for health and safety offences during the year. The requirements of four improvement notices, relating to ventilation and manual handling, have been met. All dangerous incidents are fully investigated and established procedures followed to prevent recurrence.

Reporting and monitoring mechanisms are being introduced in our European businesses.

Ethical sourcing

We are playing a leading role in improving the standard of social and ethical compliance of our suppliers of directly sourced products. A social and ethical accountability awareness check, based on SA8000 criteria, is included in

our factory audit programme to identify any issues and make suppliers aware of the need to improve. We are incorporating Dixons Group standards into our terms and conditions and intend to audit compliance.

Dixons in the community

The Dixons Foundation provides the funding for much of our community programme. It made total grants of £996,041 in the year, supporting the activities of more than 200 charities and community groups.

Supporting our future generations

We continue our partnerships with major programmes to improve educational standards in areas of deprivation and encourage the aspirations and entrepreneurial skills of young people. These include the Dixons City Technology College in Bradford and the South Bradford Educational Action Zone.

We support Academic Chairs in New Media at the London School of Economics, in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Edinburgh and in Business Ethics at the London Business School.

Our CREATE Tottenham training project recycles and refurbishes domestic appliances. The project provides paid vocational training and a path to permanent employment.

Bringing IT to schools

PC World's *Ink for I.T.* scheme supports the development of IT skills in schools by providing free equipment in return for used inkjet cartridges. The scheme has provided more than £100,000 of computer equipment to schools.

Preventing crime

We are involved in many initiatives to prevent crime through our membership of Crime Concern and support for the work of Crimestoppers.

Improving quality of life

By September 2001 the Group and its employees had raised £192,000 for the NSPCC.

In September 2001, we launched our *Health Matters* campaign, supporting the Breast Cancer Campaign, The Stroke Association, The Prostate Cancer Charity and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. To date our employees have raised more than £209,000 for the campaign.

Employee involvement

Employees are encouraged to support their local communities through programmes such as *Partners in Leadership*, which creates mentoring partnerships between business managers and head teachers and by school governor recruitment campaigns. Other activities included remodelling a children's playground for National Children's Homes, gardening at hospices and decorating a hostel for homeless people.

The Group's *Give As You Earn* scheme, run in association with the Charities Aid Foundation, enables employees to contribute to charity via their payroll.



6. Badges and keyrings were sold in all UK stores for the *Health Matters* campaign.



7. Jaline Storey and Amanda Dance, both from head office, Hemel Hempstead, paint fences at the Isabel Hospice, Welwyn Garden City on a team building challenge day.



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