

## **Fair Work First Statement – East Renfrewshire Council**

Jointly agreed by East Renfrewshire Council and Unison Trade Union, this statement confirms the council's commitment to ensuring fair working practices are in place in support of 'Fair Work First'.

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland by applying fair work criteria to grants, other funding and contracts being awarded by and across the public sector, where it is relevant to do so. Through this approach the Scottish Government is asking employers to adopt fair working practices specifically:

- payment of at least the real Living Wage to staff including apprentices
- provision of appropriate channels for effective workers' voice such as trade union recognition
- investment in workforce development
- no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts
- action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- offering flexible and family-friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment
- opposing the use of fire and re-hire practices

We are working towards advancing the Fair Work First criteria above. Our aim is to deliver good quality and fair work through continuous improvement. This will give confidence to:

- the public
- those receiving and providing funding through the public sector
- those delivering public contracts.

We can evidence what we have in place and the progress we are making to support grant funding at the application, monitoring and payment stages.

We will fully involve and engage with the trade unions on updates or changes made, to review actions and outcomes and identify further improvements for advancing the Fair Work First commitments.

We will continue to engage and consult with our other recognised Trade Union colleagues regarding this statement.

### **1. We pay the Real Living Wage**

- We are certified as a Living Wage employer through the Poverty Alliance organisation.
- We pay all employees, casuals, temporary and supply staff at least the Real Living Wage and this is monitored on an annual basis.

### **2. We have an appropriate channel for effective employee voice**

- We engage with recognised trade unions in key governance and decision-making structures through 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Joint Consultative Committees, Trade Union Management Meetings, Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers and also through having an open door policy that allows our trade union colleagues to discuss any matters with HR or management.
- We engage with trade unions in negotiation and consultation for local government staff and teachers.
- We provide facility time to support trade union engagement initiatives.
- We recognise trade unions across all employee groups.

- We encourage membership of trade unions.
- We engage in constructive dialogues for collective bargaining.
- We engage in constructive dialogue and address workplace issues and disputes.
- Trade unions are always informed and consulted during policy development.
- We have zero tolerance for bullying and/or harassment and we have a bullying and harassment policy.
- Staff have formal Quality Conversations with their managers, and one to ones as and when needed to discuss development or work matters.
- We carry out regular surveys to understand the views of our workforce.
- We provide opportunities for engagement with the Chief Executive which promotes a culture of openness and transparency.
- We have formal and informal employee engagement through a variety of communication channels including the staff intranet, newsletters, and emails.

### **3. We invest in workforce development**

- Our Organisational Development Plan outlines the programme of work the council will undertake to deliver our strategic priorities and goals.
- Our Workforce Strategy aligns the culture and changing organisational needs with our People Plan to help us prepare for initiatives that support the longer term council goals.
- Our Values framework helps shape our engagement with each other and the East Renfrewshire community.
- Our Code of Conduct helps set out how all employees are expected to behave at work, creating a better working environment for all.
- We actively provide opportunities for developing the young workforce through apprenticeships, work placements and throughout the full employment lifecycle.
- We engage with government-funded programmes to support local employability.
- We encourage mentoring and continuous learning at every stage of the employment journey. We offer it across the workforce, both in relation to specific roles and as wider development.
- We encourage, support and provide opportunities to undertake formal and informal training as well as e-learning.
- We promote an internal employee recognition programme called Kudos to acknowledge achievements and contributions, and we hold an annual We Are East Ren employee award ceremony with many categories voted on by the staff.
- We promote our mentoring scheme and succession management toolkits.

### **4. We do not use zero hours contracts inappropriately**

- Supply and casual contracts are only used when there is no alternative. Workers on these contracts are not compelled to accept work when offered, and do not suffer unfair treatment where work is refused.
- Where possible we will not use agency workers to fill longer term vacancies.
- Where possible we will use temporary (fixed-term) contracts rather than a supply or casual contract.

## **5. We take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace**

- We make sure we understand and address perceived barriers to employment within the council. We use data to understand our workforce including recruitment application data and this is monitored regularly.
- Annual reporting is undertaken for Gender, Disability and Equality pay gaps with detailed analysis undertaken to understand differences in pay.
- We use the Scottish Joint Council job evaluation scheme for Local Government staff and the results of any new posts are shared with Unison trade union.
- Local Government pay structures were reviewed in 2021 when the living wage was consolidated into pay scales. Our lowest point is higher than the Living Wage.
- Jobs covered by SNCT term and conditions are paid using the SNCT pay scales and job sizing process.
- We do not make bonus payments or any other payments to staff based on perceived merit.
- We provide equality and diversity training to staff, and any person involved in recruitment of staff must have attended mandatory training which includes an equality element.
- We have created a staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion network which is open to staff from across the council. We also have an Equality Officer network which includes lead equality people for each council department/partnership area.
- An Equality, Fairness and Rights impact assessment is undertaken before introducing new policies and procedures or making changes to existing services.
- We support flexible working across the council from the first day of employment.
- We offer employees, in roles that can accommodate it, the opportunity to adopt a hybrid workstyle, with a blend of working from home and working in a council building.
- We are a Carer Positive employer with “Established” status.
- We have signed the Pregnancy Loss Pledge through the Miscarriage Association and allow employees to take bereavement leave for pregnancy loss.
- We are a Disability Confident employer, and we encourage the employment and retention of disabled people and those with health conditions through reasonable adjustments.
- In addition to anyone who has or considers themselves to have a disability, the Guaranteed Interview scheme extends to young people with recognised caring responsibilities, care experienced young people, including care leavers up to the age of 26, employees with significant caring responsibilities, and current East Renfrewshire Council Modern and Graduate Apprentices.
- We offer a range of policies support attendance and work-life balance, including fertility, menopause, and special leave.
- Mental and financial health and wellbeing is an important focus for our council and we have put in place a range of initiatives to support employees.

## **6. We don't use 'fire and rehire' practices**

- We will carry out full and meaningful consultation when changing employees' contractual terms and conditions of employment.
- We will not use, or threaten to use, dismissal and immediate re-engagement practices.

## 7. Procurement

- East Renfrewshire Council's Procurement Team includes in all contracts an overview of the Council's approach to Fair Work Practices and also requires bidders to detail how they will commit to this. This is weighted at 5% in all tender activities which is unique as not all Councils have adopted scoring against this area as yet. By applying a weight to this in the tender evaluation it enforces that the Council considers this an important area and requires contractors working with us to comply. In addition to this we have a page on the Intranet to support procuring departments when giving consideration to this area during tender development.
- East Renfrewshire Council is a Scottish Accredited Living Wage Employer, and so we encourage all employers within the area and those we contract with to pay the real Living Wage.
- East Renfrewshire Council is committed to ensuring delivery of high quality services and achieving best value through contracts by:
  - Securing continuous improvement in the performance and delivery of its functions,
  - Maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and whole life cost,
  - Having regard to efficiency, economy, effectiveness and equal opportunities, and
  - Actively contributing to sustainable development.