

## Lancaster District Fair Work Charter

Lancaster City Council's goals of long-term environmental, economic and community success and resilience in our district can only be achieved through a collaborative partnership approach; working alongside local employers, institutions and industries to deliver on our district's many opportunities and prosper in the face of continued economic challenges.

Our shared experience of partnership during the Covid-19 pandemic has provided a strong basis for pursuing further opportunities to work together throughout the journey of economic and social recovery and renewal.

A key part of the council's '[Plan 2030](#)' strategy for the district is to take a 'Community Wealth-Building' approach to delivering 'An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy'. Community Wealth Building seeks to redirect flows of wealth, so that workers, residents and consumers benefit from the economic activity happening in their communities. This means better paid, more secure jobs and more locally rooted, "generative" businesses that share the wealth they create.

We are currently pursuing several Community Wealth-Building initiatives, which focus on business and stakeholder support including taking a proactive approach to growing the social economy and developing grass roots initiatives with SME's and encouraging growth in the green sector business base. To continue developing our Community Wealth-Building approach we seek to establish a Fair Work Charter for the Lancaster district.

The **Fair Work Charter** seeks to remove labour market inequalities and in-work poverty and provide for welcoming and accessible workplaces where all workers are treated with dignity and respect and can flourish and contribute to the wider community.

The council also recognises that climate justice is an integral part of social justice and economic prosperity, and we aim to work with other employers across the district to encourage and support efforts to make the district a net zero carbon economy.

Lancaster City Council advocates the following five elements of a Fair Work should be supported by local businesses in their employment practices to create a Fair Work District for all.

- 1. Fair Pay and Job Security**
- 2. Employee Voice and Good Employee Relations**
- 3. Healthy, Safe Workplaces**
- 4. Flexibility, Diversity and Equality**
- 5. Development and Fulfilment**

## Charter Membership

We ask initially that local businesses sign up to the charter as **supporters** by pledging that they will work towards each of these elements. We will support businesses in return in improving their employment practices in line with the charter by signposting to relevant resources and support within the district and beyond.

As businesses become confident that they are meeting the requirements of each of the Charter elements we will open applications and evidence submission through our online portal to allow us to award you full Fair Work Charter **Member** Status, showcasing your business as a **Fair Work Employer**.

Those businesses exceeding the charter Member status by going above and beyond in relation to those elements listed will be given Charter **Ambassador** status and will be expected to also support other local businesses on their charter journey.

### Why should Businesses commit to their own charter journey?

The charter allows businesses to have a positive impact on their locality, specific to the economic regeneration of the Lancaster district post pandemic. Employers with a commitment to corporate social responsibility will reap the benefits of attracting (often fluid), skilled talent to remain in the area rather than them commuting out for employment.

The pandemic has also led to a tightening of the labour market, by progressing through the charter businesses can become employers of choice. Being able to recruit and retain high value staff can lead to a competitive advantage through increases in innovation and productivity.

Those employers who already have good employment practices under each of the elements can get the recognition they deserve for these practices, and the relevant publicity for their actions to be a good employer. Those who want to improve their employment practices and address inequalities can do so through a framework supported by fellow businesses and anchor institutions.

Being committed to the charter allows businesses to access networks, support and signposting to enable charter implementation and achievement of member status.

Businesses are recognised as contributing to social value through paying a real living wage and applying the other elements of the charter. They will therefore be better able to provide social value related evidence when tendering for business from the Council and other organisations who have this approach to procurement of local goods and services.

## Fair Pay and Job Security

### Fair Pay

To ensure financial resilience of our district's working population and payment of a wage commensurate with the cost of living, employers should achieve or have a plan in place to pay their staff a Real Living Wage. Consideration should also be given to planning to ensure that third party contracted staff are also paid the Real Living Wage.

The real living wage is voluntarily paid by employers and is the only wage rate which is based on what people need to live. It is applicable to those 18 years or older and is based on a calculation made according to the cost of living, based on a 'basket' of household goods and services.

Payment of the real living wage to all employees regardless of contractual status is a huge step forwards to eradicating in-work poverty in our district.

### Job Security

Provision of stable clear contracts of employment reflective of the hours worked, rather than utilising insecure contracts such as zero hours, where they are not wanted.

A reduced reliance on overtime and provision of set hours which accurately reflect hours regularly worked.

All employers are encouraged to offer staff who work for them for a prolonged period the opportunity to become direct employees.

Employers should also seek to develop staff skills internally, minimising the need for external contracted expertise which are often at a higher cost.

Help to achieve this is available from the following resources:

CIPD Knowledge Hub – [Tackling in Work Poverty](#)

CIPD knowledge hub – [Employer/Employee views of zero hours contracts](#)

Accreditations that support this charter element:

Living Wage Foundation - [The Real Living Wage](#)

Living Wage Foundation - [Living Hours](#)

## Employee Voice and Good Employee Relations

### Good employee relations fostered with recognised trade unions

Collective bargaining and regular constructive dialogue between employers and trade unions is important to ensure good employment relations and safe workplaces. It helps facilitate mutually beneficial adjustments to employment practices, and to ensure high-quality service delivery.

Employers are encouraged to recognise and work with trade unions. Creating a regular dialogue with recognised unions and informing staff when they commence employment of their ability to join the union. Union recognition can help businesses to hear the collective voice of their employees and be aware of wider national impacts that may affect the workforce.

### Employee Voice

A culture of engagement and consultation should be fostered with employee voice at all levels being heard.

Employers should focus on facilitating engagement opportunities and maintaining workforce buy in to working practices by listening to employees regarding what works well and what doesn't. Staff networks, suggestion schemes, regular briefings and communications between management and staff are key tools to facilitate this.

Employee Recognition is encouraged, as is ensuring an understanding of how an individual role contributes to wider organisational success.

Help to achieve this is available from the following resources:

ACAS Advice Booklet – [Trade Union Recognition in the Workplace](#)

CIPD knowledge hub – [Employee Engagement Factsheet](#)

Other standards and schemes available to assist you with your journey:

CBI/TUC [Good Business Charter](#)

## Healthy, Safe Workplaces

### Health and Wellbeing

Development of a workplace wellbeing approach covering all aspects of wellbeing with business wellbeing action plans as a key tool. Planning should include thinking of how to promote and embed the five ways to wellbeing within the culture of the business (connect, take notice, give, be active, keep learning).

A clear focus on mental health as well as physical health. Leadership buy in to tackling workplace mental health, creating safe spaces for people to talk about and resolve issues which may be affecting their mental health. Use of staff support mechanisms such as mental health first aiders and staff support networks and continued awareness raising amongst the workforce regarding mental health.

### Safety at work

Meet legislative requirements relating to health and safety at work, prioritise staff and customer health and safety, have procedures in place to learn from and prevent any issues which might arise.

All employers are responsible for health and safety in their business. It is a basic employment right that people should feel safe within their work.

Help to achieve this is available from the following resources:

[Mind Business Resources](#), [Thriving at Work Report](#)

[Mental Health First Aid England](#)

HSE – [Health and Safety Basics for Business](#)

CIPD knowledge hub – health and safety at work [factsheet](#)

ACAS – [Health and Wellbeing](#) advice

Gallup - [Five Essential Elements of Wellbeing](#)

New Economics Foundation [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)

Other standards and schemes available to assist you with your journey:

[Investors in People Wellbeing Award](#)

Lancaster City Council Workplace Wellbeing Award

Health@work – [Workplace Wellbeing Charter](#)

## Flexibility, Diversity and Equality

### Flexibility

Embrace flexible working helping more people access the labour market and stay in work, supporting enhanced employee engagement and wellbeing.

Encourage applications for flexible working requests in line with legislation and where possible accommodate these requests in line with business needs. Advertise roles noting a willingness to accept requests of this nature also during the initial recruitment process.

Provide flexibility for those who require it where possible, on the premise that motivated employees with a good work life balance will be more productive and committed to the organisation.

### Diversity and Equality

Remove barriers to equal access to quality work through inclusive recruitment practices and making reasonable adjustments where required. Have a clear advertised commitment to a diverse workplace reflective of our local community, free from harassment and discrimination, and have policies or procedures in place to deal with any such issues that arise.

Development of inclusive leaders at the top of organisations and EDI training for staff to ensure a positive customer as well as employee experience, free from bias.

Creation of an inclusive business culture where diversity issues are discussed via an appropriate forum, such as employee networks, and where required, resulting actions are taken to increase inclusivity.

Help to achieve this is available from the following resources:

CIPD Knowledge Hub – [Flexible Working](#)

CIPD Knowledge Hub – [Inclusion and Diversity in the Workplace](#)

ACAS – [Improving Equality Diversity and Inclusion in your Workplace](#)

Other standards and schemes available to assist you with your journey:

[The disability confident employer scheme](#) , [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#)

[Stonewall Diversity Champions Award](#)

The TUC [Dying to Work Charter](#) for terminally ill employees

## Development and Fulfilment

### Development

Equal opportunities for learning to aid career progression, development of skills through support of recognised qualifications, apprenticeships and graduateships as well as other relevant initiatives.

A focus on assisting employees in entering professions and developing and retaining their skills for the future. Utilisation of local educational establishments to increase levels of skills within workforces to NVQ level 4 (degree level) and above to address low skills levels and retain and grow local talent.

Clear performance management processes in place to assist with skills development and business succession planning.

### Fulfilment

Drawing on the power of community generated during the pandemic, positive wider societal contribution to aid fulfilment at work should be advocated, such as volunteering and sharing of resources where appropriate for the greater good of the district.

Businesses should consider the benefits of wider corporate social responsibility in attracting staff and consider impacts of business activity on climate change. A focus on what part can be played in carbon reduction within daily working activities and sustainable working practices is encouraged.

Help to achieve this is available from the following resources:

The [National Apprenticeships Service](#)

[Lancaster and Morecambe College](#)

University of Cumbria - [Higher Level Apprenticeships](#)

Lancaster University – [Employer Engagement Team](#)

[Bay volunteers](#) Lancaster district CVS – [Volunteer Centre](#)

Carbon Trust – [Business Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)

Other standards and schemes available to assist you with your journey:

[Lancashire Skills Pledge](#)

[Carbon Literacy Project](#)