

# Fair Work First Statement

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.

Argyll and Bute Council is committed to advancing the Fair Work criteria, and to providing a positive employee experience.

The Fair Work First criteria are also referenced in our procurement contracts to encourage third party providers to adopt positive fair work practices.

This statement was developed with the following trade unions:

- Educational Institute of Scotland
- Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
- UNISON
- Unite
- NASUWT

## We have appropriate channels for effective workers' voice

- We engage with recognised trade unions through our key governance and decision-making structures. These include our local consultation forum, and the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Forum.
- We frequently hold meetings with our trade union colleagues
- Services have regular meetings with trade union representatives to discuss service-specific matters.
- We engage with trade unions in negotiation and consultation for Local Government Employees, Teachers and Associated Professionals and Chief Officials
- We provide our Trade Union Representatives with paid time off within working hours to carry out their duties.
- 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.
- We inform and consult with Trade unions when we are developing and/or reviewing policies which affect employees.
- Trade unions are included on the boards of projects which relate to organisational change decisions.
- We carry out regular surveys to understand the views and needs of our workforce. This includes topics such as Wellbeing, Digital Learning and [Flexible Working](#).
- We have an [employee suggestion scheme](#)

## Pay

- National pay awards are negotiated between COSLA and Trades Unions on an annual basis for Local Government Employees, Teachers and Associated Professionals and Chief Officials.
- We have consolidated the living wage into our salary scales
- We are committed to paying our employees the Scottish Local Government Living Wage

- We are actively working towards incrementally paying all employees at least the real Living Wage.

## **We invest in workforce development**

- Our [Employee Code of Conduct](#) and competency framework helps set out how all employees are expected to behave at work creating a better working environment for all.
- We engage with [government-funded programmes](#) to support local employability.
- Our [Wellbeing Strategy](#) and [Employee Assistance Programme](#) promotes the [physical](#), [mental and emotional](#) and [financial wellbeing](#) of our workforce.
- We have trained [Mental Health First Aiders](#) and a dedicated [Wellbeing Team](#) who colleagues can contact in times of vulnerability, or to help signpost to the most appropriate services or policies.
- We provide learning and development opportunities for employees at all levels in the Council and celebrate learning with our annual [learning awards](#)
- We are committed to providing apprenticeships and trainee opportunities through our [Growing Our Own](#) framework
- Formal and informal learning is offered and encouraged across the workforce, relating to specific roles as well as [wider development](#)
- We have [digital champions](#) who support our employees to develop digital skills
- We support employees to undertake public or reservist duties.

## **We don't use zero hours contracts inappropriately**

- Workers can join a list to be available for 'supply' work but there is no obligation to offer or accept work
- We regularly review supply work to ensure it is not used for long term appointments
- Where possible, we will use a temporary contract rather than a supply or casual agreement.

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

- We have many types of paid and unpaid leave including enhanced maternity and adoption pay and leave; paid leave to look after a close relative who is critically ill or injured; paid safe leave for victims of domestic abuse; Foster/Kinship and Guardianship leave; Career Breaks etc.
- We are a [Disability Confident employer](#), encouraging the employment and retention of disabled people and those with health conditions through reasonable adjustments. We have a guaranteed interview scheme for candidates that consider themselves to have a disability.
- We are committed to ensuring that those who serve, or have served, and their families are treated with fairness and respect. We are proud holders of the [Silver Defence Employer Recognition Award](#) and work closely with the armed forces community in many areas.
- As a council we believe in the principle of equality and opportunity: everyone should have the chance to succeed. We recognise our responsibilities as a service provider

and employer to encourage the fair treatment of all individuals and to tackle inequalities.

- Our [Equality Outcomes](#) were developed in partnership with our trade union colleagues and other key stakeholders. They apply to the Council, the Education Authority and the Licensing Board.
- We report progress on our Equality Outcomes in our [Mainstreaming Report](#) which is produced every two years.
- We carry out an [Equal Pay Audit](#) every 4 years and make this available on our website.
- We have an Equality Forum, chaired by a member of the Council's Strategic Management Team, which considers equality issues and their impacts on service users in Argyll and Bute, as well as equality issues that affect staff and their employment. This Forum includes representatives from the council, the Health and Social Care Partnership, other interested community planning partners, and Trades Unions.

## **We offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers**

- We support flexible working across the council from the first day of employment.
- We have a [Flexible and Hybrid Working Policy](#) which encourages managers to take a flexible first "can do" approach to flexible working requests
- We have a Flexi Time Procedure which offers flexibility to employees in terms of when they work
- Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave procedures are available
- Time off for IVF treatment is provided
- We support a range of working practices including part time and term time working

## **We don't use termination and re-engagement mechanisms inappropriately**

- We only consider effecting change where there is a legitimate business need, and we strive to achieve change through agreement
- We are committed to working with our Trade Unions partners to ensure there is effective consultation and, where appropriate, negotiation relating to change