

This statement has been agreed between Scottish Borders Council and the recognised trades unions, GMB, Unison and Unite.

Fair Work First - Scottish Borders Council

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, in particular:

- 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 rehire practices

Scottish Borders Council is working towards advancing these Fair Work First criteria. Our aim is to deliver good quality and fair work through continuous improvement.

The Council has agreed this Fair Work statement with the recognised trades unions.

1. We pay the Real Living Wage

- The Council is an accredited Living Wage employer.
- We pay all employees, including, temporary, casual and supply staff at least the Real Living Wage and this is monitored on an annual basis.
- This includes apprentices.
- The Scottish Borders Living Wage Group is working together to make the Scottish Borders a Living Wage Region.

2. We have an appropriate channel for effective employee voice

- We engage with the recognised trade unions in key governance and decision-making structures through Joint Consultative Groups, monthly Trade Union Meetings, the Borders Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers, the Council's Health & Safety Committee and the Joint Staff Forum for employees in Health & Social Care integrated services.
- We have a collaborative approach that allows our trade union colleagues to discuss any matters with HR or management.
- We provide trade union access to induction programmes

- We are committed to meaningful consultation with trade unions along with negotiation and consultation for local government staff and teachers.
- We provide facility time to support trade union engagement initiatives and provide facilities such as office accommodation to facilitate these activities.
- We recognise trade unions across all employee groups.
- We encourage membership of trade unions. This includes a statement in each contract of employment encouraging employees to consider union membership.
- We engage in constructive dialogues for collective bargaining.
- We engage in constructive dialogue and address workplace issues and disputes.
- We are committed to informing, consulting and updating during policy development.
- We have a Colleague Community, which encourages a regular open dialogue between Colleague Representatives, Senior Managers and Elected members. Quarterly meetings are held which all employees are welcome to attend.
- We have zero tolerance for bullying and/or harassment and we have Dignity & Respect in the Workplace and Equality, Diversity & Human Rights policies.
- We have an appraisal system in place for all employees (other than teachers who have a separate Professional Review & Development process).
- Managers are expected to draw up a team agreement with their team, covering matters such as the regularity of team meetings, one to ones and catch ups to discuss development or work matters. In the case of teams working in an agile way this includes when meetings should be held in person.
- We carry out surveys at least annually to understand the views of our workforce. Each department then prepares an action plan based on the survey responses.
- We have a robust Grievance Policy which allows employees' concerns to be effectively considered and appropriately addressed.
- We provide opportunities for engagement with the Chief Executive which promotes a culture of openness and transparency. These include regular Senior Managers' meetings and the publication of reports from the Chief Executive on Council Management Team meetings.
- We have formal and informal employee engagement through a variety of communication channels including the staff intranet, emails and Viva Engage.

3. We invest in workforce development

- We have a People Planning process which is aligned with the Council Plan and Financial Planning process. This also aligns with the Employee Appraisals.
- Our Training, Learning & Development Strategy aims to encourage employees to achieve their potential and increase job satisfaction and morale as well as ensure employees have the skills to effectively deliver Council services and increase the quality of decision

making. The strategy is underpinned by Training & Qualification Matrices for each group of staff and the provision of mandatory and core training.

- Our Competency Framework sets out the skills and behaviours expected of all employees. This is tailored according to their position in the Council.
- Our SBLearn platform, which is accessible by all employees, has 682 resources and features communities and Learning Pathways where employees can be directed to structured training programmes specific to their role or the communities they belong to.
- We provide extensive management training, both online and face to face. This covers employees going in to their first management role up to senior managers.
- Succession Planning takes place with departments to identify future opportunities and consider development of employees.
- We are committed to the concept of Grow your Own, through the use of Career Pathways, Graduate Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships and Traineeships. This includes “non traditional” Traineeships such as a route to allow social care staff to qualify as Social Workers.
- Mandatory training for all employees includes Equality & Diversity training and an Introduction to Climate Emergency.
- Our Code of Conduct helps set out how all employees are expected to behave at work, creating a better working environment for all and better services to the Scottish Borders community.
- 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 have a Staff Volunteering Scheme, which allows paid leave to provide support to any charity of Council service in the Scottish Borders area..
- We have a quarterly award: #YourPart Awards. This allows employees to nominate a colleague who has gone above and beyond in their contribution. The winner receives a cash award and all of the nominations are publicised.
- We hold Long Service Award ceremonies to acknowledge employees’ contributions. These are held by the Chief Executive and senior Elected Members. There is a gift voucher or charitable contribution for employees achieving 25 years’ service and certificates for those with 15 years’ service and in 5 year increments after that.

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. We monitor our use of supply and casual contracts.

- 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.
- We are also committed to only using temporary contracts where necessary, and if possible will offer permanent contracts.

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.
- Reporting is undertaken for Ethnic Minority, Gender, Disability and Equality pay gaps with analysis undertaken to understand differences in pay and we will set up a working group including unions to address these differences through an action plan
- Council staff have their roles assessed through a robust and non discriminatory job evaluation scheme
- Jobs covered by SNCT terms 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, other than the #YourPart and Long Service Awards referred to above.
- We provide equality and diversity training to staff, and any person involved in recruitment of staff must have undertaken mandatory training which includes an equality element.
- We have an Equalities Forum made up of senior Officers and jointly chaired by two Directors which oversees equalities matters. There are also a number of Equalities Ambassadors who are Officers from various services offering support and advice on equalities matters. Targets are set and action plans in place where appropriate.
- An Integrated Impact Assessment, covering the equality protected characteristics, Fairer Scotland duty and other groups such as care experienced people and veterans is undertaken before introducing new policies and procedures or making changes to existing services, policies or procedures.
- 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 agile working, with a blend of working from home and working in a council building.
- We have signed the Pregnancy Loss Pledge through the Miscarriage Association and allow employees to take bereavement leave for pregnancy loss.
- We adopted Parental Bereavement Leave prior to it becoming a legal requirement, and this is given as paid leave.
- We have Guidelines on Special Leave which allow paid leave in a range of circumstances.

- We are a Disability Confident employer, and we encourage the employment and retention of disabled people and those with health conditions through reasonable adjustments.
- We have a range of policies to support attendance and work-life balance, including Attendance Management, Mentally Healthy Workplace, Reasonable Adjustments and Menopause.
- 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. These include an Employee Assistance Programme which provides a range of financial benefits, a suite of medical assistance through Aviva Digicare and an Employee Wellbeing Handbook.
- We have an established team of Mental Health First Aiders who provide a source of support and signposting to appropriate services.

6. We offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment.

- We support a range of flexible working practices across the council from the first day of employment.
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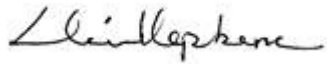
7. The use of fire and rehire practice

- We only consider effecting change where there is a legitimate business need
- We strive to achieve change through agreement
- We are committed to working with our Trade Unions partners to ensure there is effective consultation and negotiation relating to change
- We will carry out full and meaningful consultation when changing employees' contractual terms and conditions of employment.

8. We are committed to ethical procurement.

- We will follow the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, statutory guidance and Best Practice Guidance when engaging in procurement activities.

Signed



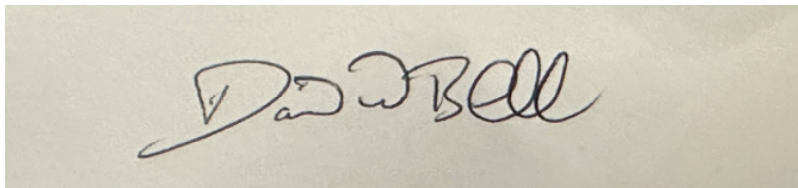
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Unite